

The poor regions of England and Wales are poorer than any region in Scotland or the south of Ireland (although obviously there are smaller inner city and rural pockets in these lands that are just as poor).

The great behemoth is the City of London, the richest in Europe, an insatiable parasite that robs all the UK and Europe.

The Yes campaign was basically for a re-distribution of wealth to the 'people' (read capitalists) of Scotland - it would not help

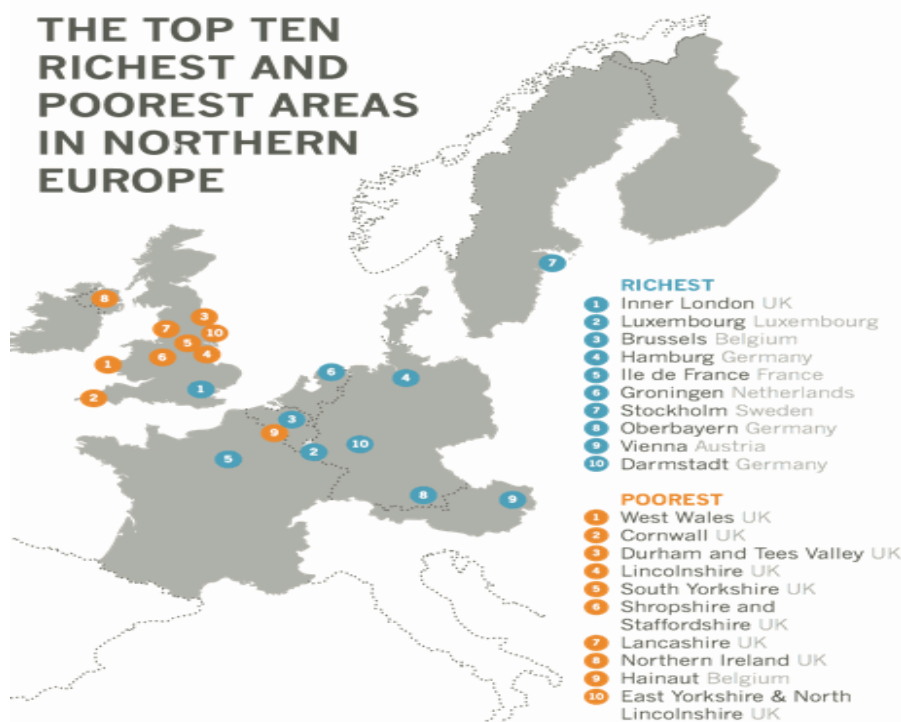
the poor of Scotland or the rest of the UK. The dynamic of it is encapsulated in the SNP slogan, "what would you say to living in one of the world's wealthiest nations?".

That is not how vote Yes leftists saw it; they would be horrified to be accused of such insularism but it's there nonetheless.

This projected independence is not even comparable to the miserable variety the Irish Free State got in 1922-3, which at least had a strong Republican opposition.

The poorest regions in the UK are the poorest in Northern Europe

THE TOP TEN RICHEST AND POOREST AREAS IN NORTHERN EUROPE



What does this mean?

In the UK we think of ourselves as having similar standard of living to other countries in Northern Europe like France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and the Nordic Countries. These are our nearest neighbours. They share a similar economic history to us, and have experienced similar political stability since the second world war. We also have close ties as members of the European Union.

However, the poorest UK regions are by far the poorest in Northern Europe. This is because the UK is much more unequal than other countries, where there is nowhere as rich as London, but nowhere as poor as our poorest regions.

Socialist Fight Where We Stand

Socialist Fight is a member of the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International with the Liga Comunista of Brazil and the Tendencia Militante Bolchevique of Argentina.

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tmb1917.blogspot.com.br/

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of SF

1.WE STAND WITH KARL MARX: 'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule' (The International Workingmen's Association 1864, General Rules).

2.The capitalist state consists, in the last analysis, of ruling-class laws within a judicial system and detention centres overseen by the armed bodies of police/army who are under the direction and are controlled in acts of defence of capitalist property rights against the interests of the majority of civil society. The working class must overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a workers' state based on democratic soviets/workers' councils to suppress the inevitable counter-revolution of private capitalist profit against planned production for the satisfaction of socialised human need.

3.We recognise the necessity for revolutionaries to carry out serious ideological and political struggle as direct participants in the trade unions (always) and in the mass reformist social democratic bourgeois workers' parties despite their pro-capitalist leaderships when conditions are favourable. Because we see the trade union bureaucracy and their allies in the Labour party leadership as the most fundamental obstacle to the struggle for power of the working class, outside of the state forces and their direct agencies themselves, we must fight and defeat and replace them with a revolutionary leadership by mobilising the base against the pro-capitalist bureaucratic misleaders to open the way forward for the struggle for workers' power.

4.We are fully in support of all mass mobilisations against the onslaught of this reactionary Con-Lib Dem coalition. However, whilst participating in this struggle we will oppose all policies

which subordinate the working class to the political agenda of the petty-bourgeois reformist leaders of the Labour party and trade unions

5. We support the fight of all the specially oppressed; Black and Asian, women, lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people against discrimination in all its forms and their right to organise separately in that fight in society as a whole. In particular we defend their right to caucus inside trade unions and in working class political parties.

6.We recognise that class society, and capitalism as the last form of class society, is by its nature patriarchal. In that sense the oppression of women is different from all other forms of oppression and discrimination. Because this social oppression is inextricably tied to private property, and its inheritance, to achieve full sexual, social and economic freedom and equality for all we need to overthrow class society itself.

7.We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of people to fight back against racist and fascist attacks by any means necessary. Self-defence is no offence! We support 'No Platform' for all fascists but never call on the capitalist state to ban fascist marches or parties; these laws would inevitably primarily be used against workers' organisations, as history has shown.

8.We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and Imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Workers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price. Only union membership and pay rates can counter employers who seek to exploit immigrant workers as cheap labour to undermine the gains of past struggles.

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The following are just 8 of the 26 points of the political programme of the Socialist Fight Group which can be found at our blog here:

<http://socialistfight.com/>

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Socialist Fight £5,000 Conference Fund

Socialist Fight will be holding its Second National Conference in London In March 2015 and will be hosting the Second Conference of the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International later in July. Comrades are expected to come from Brazil and Argentina to the International event and we hope to bring comrades and close co-thinkers from nearer home to our own conference.

Gerry Downing attended the very successful Founding Conference of the LCFI in Sao Paulo, Brazil, last August with the Liga Comunista of Brazil and the Tendencia Militante Bolchevique of Argentina. We hope to bring these and comrades from Asia and Africa to the Second Conference.

It will be expensive on a small organisation to produce the literature, subsidise flights (if necessary), provide accommodation and hire halls for both these events. We are therefore appealing for a £5.000 Special Conference Fund to help pay for these events. Please make cheques payable to:

Unity Trust Bank, Socialist Fight No 2 Account 2, Account Number 20227517



Page 3 Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

Editorial: A Labour vote is a class vote

A Labour vote is a class vote

Trotsky made his position on the British Labour party very clear in all of his writings,

“for every revolutionary organisation in Britain its attitude to the masses and to the class is almost coincident with its attitude towards the Labour Party, which bases itself on the trade unions”.^[1]

Although the policy of the existing left wing of the party was as dire then as it is now,

“The policy of the Opposition in the Labour Party is unspeakably bad. But this only means that it is necessary to counterpose to it inside the Labour Party another, a correct Marxist policy. That isn’t so easy? With this we are entirely in accord: the bureaucracy will not surrender. But the revolutionists, functioning outside and inside, can and must succeed in winning over tens and hundreds of thousands of workers.”^[2] ...

“A revolutionary group of a few hundred comrades is not a revolutionary party and can work most effectively at present by opposition to *social patriots* within the mass organisations. In view of the increasing acuteness of the international situation, it is absolutely essential to be within the mass organisations while there is the possibility of doing revolutionary work within them.”^[3]

As we will show class consciousness is lodged in workers organisations and is a long time in the making, historically. In Chapter 1 of *Anti-Dühring* Engels observes:

“In 1831, the first working-class rising took place in Lyons; between 1838 and 1842, the first national working-class movement, that of the English Chartists, reached its height. The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie came to the front in the history of the most advanced countries in Europe, in proportion to the development, upon the one hand, of modern industry, upon the other, of the newly-acquired political supremacy of the bourgeoisie. Facts more and more strenuously gave the lie to the teachings of bourgeois economy as to the identity of the interests of capital and labour, as to the universal harmony and universal prosperity that would be the consequence of unbridled competition.”^[4]

There are now innumerable workers’ parties throughout the planet: Maoist/Marxist-Leninist international groupings basing themselves on the heritage of the Comintern in its Third Period of ultra-leftism (1928-35) as well as Trotskyist Internationals claiming to be the Fourth International or setting themselves the task of regenerating it (the latter includes the LCFI) and a handful of fifth internationalists who claim to stand in the tradition of the first four revolutionary internationals.

Five theses

In the 1989 pamphlet, *Class Consciousness and the Revolutionary Party* we set out four main theses that revolutionaries should defend and develop. In December 2011, in the light of the theoretical developments made by the common position on the war in Libya taken by Socialist Fight, the Liga Comunista of Brazil and the Revolutionary Marxist Group of South Africa, we became acutely aware that there was a vital missing element in those four theses and sought to rectify it in the new Introduction. We now add the fifth theses to the original four, which the struggle over Libya had forced on our consciousness. This asserts our consistent revolutionary internationalism as developed by the Revolutionary Comintern in its first four Congresses and defended by Lenin, Trotsky and all revolutionary socialists since:

1. Working class (and of course all social) consciousness develops out of the social relations of production in dialectical, mutual and many sided interactions between the revolutionary party, all working class political parties, the parties of the bourgeoisie, the non party vanguard and the broad mass of the working class and oppressed.

2. The great historic experience of the Russian Revolution of 1905 was necessary before Marxists could develop the Leninist theory of the revolutionary party and its relationship to the working class. Only democratic centralism enables the revolutionary party to develop Marxism.

3. Class consciousness does not develop in the minds of individual workers divorced from their social relations. It is lodged in the organisations of the working class. That is the trade unions and reformist, Stalinist, centrist and revolutionary parties and groups vying for the leadership of the class.

4. The Marxist method is dialectical materialism and the application of this method to the class struggle is the Transitional Method (TM). This can only operate effectively within the practice of the United Front (UF). That is we must learn how to defend strategic principles whilst utilising all the flexible tactics necessary to build the revolutionary party and advance the struggles of the class towards the goal of the socialist revolution.^[5]

5. The class consciousness of the working class does not and cannot develop in single, isolated countries. Given the global character of capitalism itself and the ever-increasing mutual dependency of all national economies on the world division of labour (“just in time” production methods, etc.) and on world trade and global financial markets in its imperialist stage it is at this level that all working class consciousness, reformist, centrist and revolutionary, develops or regresses. The falling rate of profit is an international phenomenon driving imperialist powers to WWII independently of their will and consciousness, the revolutionary party in every country can only exist and develop as a section of the World Party of Socialist revolution, a reformed Fourth International.

The Workers United Front

In the first place it is necessary to defend our joint orientation to the TU’s AND the Labour party in Britain and to their counterparts internationally as the correct method to approach the working class and develop their class consciousness and win the best elements to the banner of revolutionary Trotskyism. Trotsky proposed a Workers United Front (WUF) between the KPD and the SPD in Germany in the early 1930s, specifically rejecting the Stalinist notion of a “UF from below” but proposing one which was directed at BOTH the SPD leaders (in the party and the trade unions) AND the rank-and-file; from ABOVE AND BELOW he never tired of emphasising.

The UF places demands on these misleaders to fight capitalist austerity and the fascists, etc. which would expose them in action before their ranks as betrayers and sell-outs by means of this engagement. In other words, like Trotsky who was convinced the SPD, as part of the German labour movement (a bourgeois-workers’ party who had committed far worse crimes against the German working class than Labour has done to the British), was

A Labour vote is a class vote

a central roadblock to the fight against fascism and for the revolution in the 1930s so now we are convinced that both the TU bureaucracy and its allied Labour party leaders are absolute roadblocks to advancing the class struggle to revolution in Britain today.

The task still is to set its ranks against its leadership. Simply denouncing them amounted to a demand that their ranks desert them and join us, merely a futile propagandist gesture which could only lead to increasing ultra-leftist frustration. We know that the KPD contemptuously dismissed Trotsky's advice; the SPD were "social-fascists" they said. Those who characterise Labour, social democracy internationally and bourgeois workers' parties of Stalinist and other origins, like the SACP of South Africa and the PT of Brazil and the Indian CPI and CPI (M) for instance, as simply "bourgeois-imperialists" play the same role and use the same mistaken tactic of the "united front from below" as the German KPD and the third period Stalinists did.

The ABC of Marxism

Here is Trotsky in 1932 quoting from and defending his 1922 resolution to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern where he makes it clear that the WUF tactic in Germany was not a one-off for the early 1930s only but was the "*ABC of Marxism*":

"Is the united front to be extended so as to include only the working masses, or so as to include also opportunistic leaders? ... Were we able to simply unite the working masses around our banner ... by eliminating the reformist party, or trade union organizations – that, of course, would be the best way. But, in that case, the very question of the united front, in its present form, would be non-existent. In the question of the united front, as it is raised, we observe a passive and wishy-washy tendency masked by verbal intransigence... Doesn't it seem as if these lines were written today against Stalin-Manuilsky-Thälmann-Neumann?"

Actually, they were written ten years ago, against Frossard, Cachin, Charles Rappaport, Daniel Renoult and other French opportunists disguising themselves with ultra-leftism. We put this question point blank to the Stalinist bureaucracy: Were the theses we quoted "counter-revolutionary" even during that time when they expressed the policies of the Russian Politbureau, with Lenin at its head, and when they defined the policy of the Comintern? We warn them duly not to attempt in answer to reply that conditions have changed since that period: the matter does not concern questions of conjuncture; but, as the text itself puts it, of the ABC of Marxism. [6]

As *Revolutionaries and the Labour Party* noted

"The argument put forward ... that the situation is ripe nationally for an independent electoral challenge to Labour from the left bears no relationship to political reality. These groups ignore Lenin's emphasis on the need for 'a sober assessment of the actual level of political consciousness of the working class as a whole (and not just its communist vanguard)'. It is not that their line doesn't find a resonance among some groups of workers. Periods of retreat and demoralisation frequently produce ultra-left moods in a minority of the class. The real question is whether this line represents a correct approach to the politically conscious sections of the working class as a whole. And the answer is that it does not." [7]

Scotland, Spain, Greece and Ireland

Those like Tommy Sheridan in Scotland who now see their role is to smash Labour in Scotland and join in a popular front with the Greens and the SNP against them betray the class, they have rejected class politics entirely – see SF statement on this (p. 25). Even more bizarre is the development of *Left Unity* who have moved on from the politics of the anti-Marxist intersectionalists

[8] to embrace the politics of USFI-backed Podemos of Spain.

They are now vying in the opinion polls with the traditional parties of government and proclaim themselves to be a party "neither of the left nor of the right" and like their Greek counterpart, Syriza and Sinn Féin in Ireland, have indicated that they will pose no threat to capitalism whatsoever if they manage to achieve the

reins of power. Podemos's leader Iglesias has rejected all his previous talk of cancelling the debt and now talks about an "orderly restructuring" of Spain's financial burden.

Similarly the election of Mick Cash as leader of the RMT may indicate a move to the right in industrial terms but the electoral fortunes of the Europhobic *No to EU, Yes to Democracy* in European elections and of the *Trade Union Socialist Coalition* (TUSC) in British elections indicates that the backers of these reformist electoral enterprises have made "no sober assessment of the actual level of political consciousness of the working class".

The most class conscious section of the working class will vote Labour in 2015 because they see it as the only viable alternative to the Tories on which they can have some influence via the trade unions. In this there is a kernel of truth, provided Marxists can give it a conscious political expression. In the trade unions we fight for a rank and file orientation via the Grass Roots Left and in the Labour party we intervene in the LRC. This is how we seek to give conscious expression to the unconscious historical process by united front transitional demands.

Notes

[1] Trotsky, *Writings on Britain*, vol. 3, p. 107.

[2] Leon Trotsky, *ILP and the Fourth International*, *In the Middle of the Road*, (18 September 1935) <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1935/09/ilp-fi.htm>

[3] Leon Trotsky's *Writings on Britain*, Volume 3, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/britain/v3/ch02i.htm>

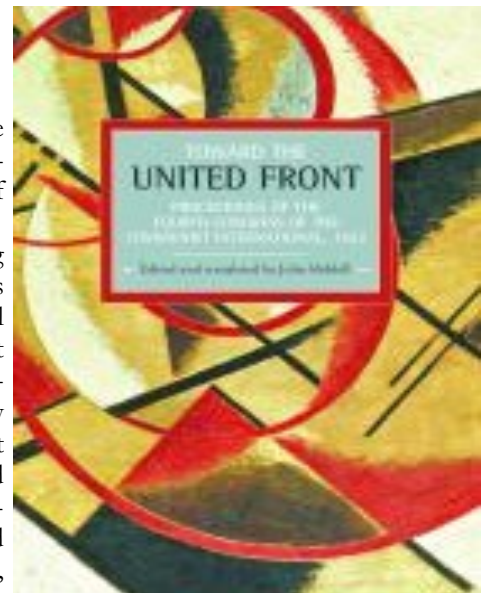
[4] Fredrick Engles, *Anti-Dühring* http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Anti-D%C3%BChring/Part_1/Chapter_1

[5] *Class Consciousness and the Revolutionary Party*, (Available in French and Spanish also), By Gerry Downing <http://socialistfight.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/in-defence-of-trotskyism-no-3.pdf>

[6] Leon Trotsky, *What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/germany/1932-ger/next02.htm>

[7] *Revolutionaries and the Labour Party*, <http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/document/ltr/wil-revs-labour94.htm>

[8] This anti-Marxist theory says that various biological, social and cultural categories such as [gender](#), [race](#), [class](#), [ability](#), [sexual orientation](#), [caste](#), and other axes of [identity](#) interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic [injustice](#) and [social inequality](#).



Toward the United Front, Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, 1922, Edited and translated by John Riddell, 2012

THE PEOPLE vs THE GOVERNMENT, DWP & ATOS



Benefits and the Disabled

By Ella Downing

One could be forgiven in thinking that the British government benefits reforms are actively targeting the disabled. From the bedroom tax, which is a financial penalty for those disabled people who need an extra room due to their impairment, thought to the disastrous transition from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independence Payments (PIP), the inhumane ATOS Work Capability Assessments (WCAs) and the continued governmental attacks on the Independent Living Fund (a pool of ring-fenced money for those most severely disabled to live a more independent life), at every turn those incapacitated and out of work are finding it harder and harder to get by.

The logic behind what the Con-Dems cutting the 'spare room subsidy' - known to all and sundry as the Bedroom Tax - is that the tax pool is subsidising benefits recipients for having an extra room in their home. The cruelty lies in the fact that while thousands upon thousands have an extra room, there is a piddling amount of homes

with fewer rooms for those affected to move into. A disabled person may need an extra room to sleep in because of difficulties in sharing a room with a partner; a room for carers to stay over; cumbersome equipment such as hoists may also need to be stored in an extra room.

Ian Duncan Smith's hopes that his brain child, PIP, will soon take over from DLA. Do not think for a second you will get more money from this new benefit. The Department for Work and Pensions estimates that PIP is six months behind schedule, but I know of a man whose wait for PIP, whilst not being eligible for DLA due to his applying for PIP, has taken over a year already with no resolution in sight.

ATOS has recently pulled out of their contract to provide the WCAs, a tick box approach which decided who gets the primary incapacity benefits known as Employment and Support Allowance, (ESA), and whether they go into the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) or the Support Group (the group for those who are never expected to attain employments again). ATOS as recently sacked all its doctors, preferring the less qualified and cheaper assistant of

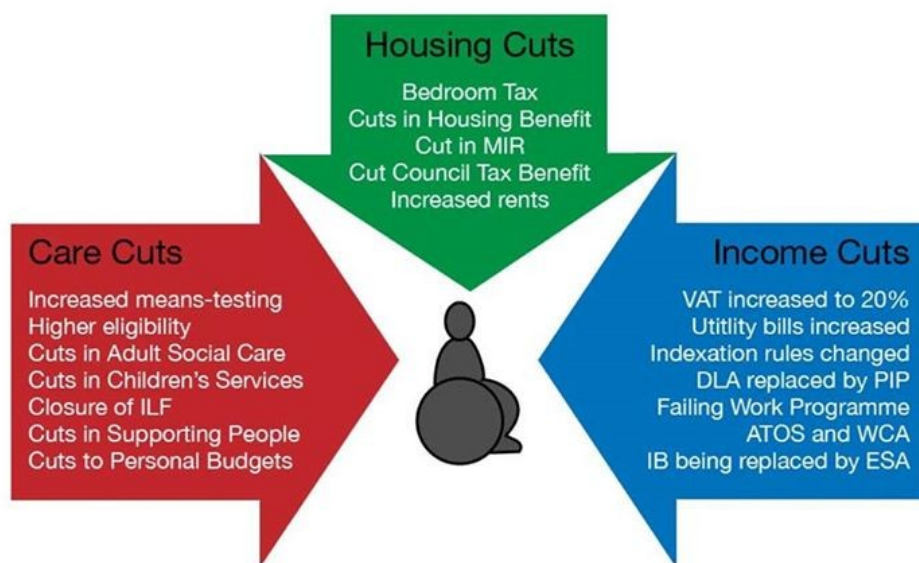
nurses and physios. With a higher threshold for attaining the new incapacity benefits, it is estimated that thousands have died within six weeks of being declared either fit for work, or work related activity. The system is not fit for purpose.

With approaching a million people having had their benefits stopped within the last year, and a majority of those who appeal winning their benefits back, the DWP propose in a private document to charge people for the right to have their case heard before a judge/magistrate.

This follows in the footsteps of a decision that sacked workers must pay to have their appeals against the sacking in an Employment Tribunal heard. It represents an extension of the agenda to penalise the poor and hinder their access to justice, and will affect disabled claimants disproportionately.

The message from the Con-Dem government is simple, don't be poor and disabled or we might just leave you destitute!

Cuts that target disabled people



[Source: Duffy S (2014) Counting the Cuts. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform]

bit.ly/counting-cuts

Workers Fight Employers – as trade union tops retreat in unison

By Graham Durham (Unite the Union branch secretary and LRC National Committee – personal capacity)

There has been a widespread belief amongst soft left activists – such as those of the Labour Representation Committee majority – that the British working class lies beaten and bloodied after six years of austerity and that blame cannot be placed at the hands of the trade union bureaucracy for the failure to fight back. After all, we are told, Len McCluskey, Dave Prentis and others cannot make workers fight.

Such nonsensical defeatism has been exposed again in recent weeks as trade union members take strike action to defend their interests. Possibly the most inspiring example has been the 17 days of strike action by 650 UNITE members at St Mungo's in London. Faced with an attack on the wages and conditions of new staff and the refusal of management to back down, UNITE members voted to escalate and extend the strike. A visit to their picket lines is a truly inspiring experience (strikes recommence 5 November).

The TUC/Peoples Assembly march on 18 October attracted huge numbers of workers, defying the claims that the working-class is defeated. In London 90,000 marched to show their defiance of austerity whether Tory/Lib Dem imposed or suggested by the Labour servant of neoliberalism, Ed Balls. Although Ed Miliband should also be named here we are aware he 'forgot' this pledge to slash spending in his Labour conference speech.

The 18 October should have been the culmination of the biggest strike wave against austerity following a week of strike action. There was a magnificent response by NHS workers on Monday and a fantastic response from PCS members on Friday. Mark Serwotka, PCS General Secretary, told the BBC that a 2.3% pay rise was essential just to allow workers to keep up with inflation in one year.

Yet in the middle of this week of strikes there was a 'hole in the middle'. Just like the tooth-rotting mint, strikes by local government workers had decayed as a result of a decision by UNISON. Dave 'Britain deserves a pay rise' Prentis had decided that a 2.2% pay offer from 2015 (which represents a further pay cut) was the best that could be achieved 'short of extended strike action'. The strike was called off and quickly followed by the GMB and UNITE leaderships who represent many fewer local government staff.

Many GMB branches and UNISON activists are busy trying to secure rejection of the wage cut offered by the local government employers (and behind them the Tory/Lib Dem cuts on council spending).

The lack of a unified week of strike action which could have shaken the Tories was deliberately sabotaged by the trade union tops and their union machines. Prentis, McCluskey and Paul Kenny wanted to do the minimum to show anger



The inspiring St Mungo's workers show their fighting spirit!

of their members whilst ensuring that Ed Miliband was not embarrassed by trade union strength.

Militant workers in all three unions and beyond will learn deep lessons from this betrayal – whilst fighting to reject the pathetic offer and reinstate strike action against local government employers. Questions will be asked of those – such as the leaderships of the NUT and NAS/UWT – who declined to support the pay campaign of other public service union sin this week of action.

In each union and across the Labour party, advanced workers must demand greater strike action to secure pay rises and an end to austerity. Such a movement must not only defeat the Tory/Lib Dem coalition but ensure a future Labour government must abandon World Bank economic cuts.

Miliband, immigration, racism and the crisis of reformism

By Alan Hunter

Ed Miliband's recent speech on immigration in Chatham shows the rightward drift of the Labour party leadership. UKIP with its reactionary and racist ideology is using race to try and divide the working class. UKIP, the Tories and the Labour leadership are blaming migrants for the crisis of capitalism.

In an article in Socialist Fight 16 we explained "working class people in Britain are right to be concerned about the lack of affordable housing, low wages, and the strain faced by our public services. But migrants (on whose labour our essential public services often rely) are not to blame for those problems as migrants are not in control of rents, wages or public sector spending. Employers, landlords and the government which represents their interests are".

In his speech reported in *The Telegraph*, "Miliband pledged a Labour government to bring in exit checks to count all immigration in and out of the UK". This xenophobia is being fanned by UKIP, a party of racists. Miliband is now meekly following the agenda set by the racists. Miliband also pledged a future Labour government would, "make it illegal for employers to bring in foreign workers to undercut the wages of British staff". Advocating openly racist views he said he would, "ban recruitment agencies from only hiring foreign workers and ignoring Britons".

His support for imperialist war in Iraq and Syria as well as his views on immigration reveal that the Labour leadership is going to fight the general

election on a right wing agenda. The Labour party, which is a bourgeois workers' party, was founded and built by the working class so that it would have political representation in bourgeois parliaments. Miliband was supported in his recent election as leader by sections of the trade union bureaucracy. He is hostage to fortune and in this move to the right he is following the trajectory of Blair and his brother David Miliband.

Labour will not win the next general election on an openly racist programme. The Labour leadership should be advocating socialist policies, nationalisation, workers' control, defence and expansion of the NHS, tax the bankers and the rich in favour of a basic redistribution of wealth in favour of the working class. Miliband's alternative is to launch attacks on workers and their families. Instead of adopting racist views the Labour leadership should be advocating and encouraging a truly multi-cultural society where communities can coexist together in a common fight to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism.

Socialist Fight makes the following demands

- No to immigration controls, no borders for the free flow of peoples from one country to another.
- For a multi-cultural society that rejects racism and its odious creed.
- For socialist policies, reject the right wing and racist agenda proposed by Miliband.

By adopting UKIP's agenda the Labour party leadership under Miliband will be leading Labour

to ignominious defeat at the May 2015 general election.

Socialist Fight calls on all workers and Labour party members to reject Miliband's racism and fight to change Labour

party policy on this issue. Move resolutions in your ward party, CLP trade union branch opposing these outright racist views. Ensure that it is not policy in Labour's manifesto, lobby and influence all Labour party MPs, councillors and NEC and Regional officials.

As Socialist Fight argued in its editorial in SF 16:

"The serious business of splitting and dividing the working class so that it turns inwards and fights amongst itself and does not challenge the capitalist system itself is the concern of all capitalist political parties and of the Labour leaders and the trade union bureaucracies as the prime defenders of the capitalist system within the workers movement".



Nigel Farage cancelled a talk in Cambridge on 17 October because he was due to face a gauntlet of protestors angered by his party's "ludicrous policies and blatant racist agenda".

Housing: the pressure will continue; there will be no giving up!

By Sarah Counihan Sanchez, 17, Housing4All, Queens Park Community School

Housing shortage is a growing issue affecting many workers; they just exist in lives full of insecurity rather than living with a sense of confidence in the future.

Here in Brent, the regeneration of several areas in the Borough is leading to growing concern and thoughts of 'social cleansing' with the cost of rents and living in general being impossible to cope with completely on your own without some form of support from the council or organisation whether it be housing benefit or even a food bank.

We have been told by Brent Council that the problem with building new homes in the borough is that there is simply not enough space there. When challenged by the argument that the space new homes are currently being built on that are being sold to investors abroad, the subject was changed. Housing councillor Margaret McLennan mentioned it later on, saying that selling to investors generates money for the borough, but that's too little too late for those in need of accommodation. Residents, not only from Brent but from many London councils are being moved out to Birmingham, Manchester and other places, their roots are torn up and they are losing their own community connections.

When people are moved to different boroughs those boroughs are having to make cuts to accommodate new residents and a sense of otherness is being created. This leads to a break down in the community. Currently in Kilburn half of the homes being built have been sold to private investors before they have even been completed. This will result in the new owners renting the properties out for sky high rents, which the council will have to assist people in paying, costing them even more money. A major example of this are the flats currently being built in Willesden Green, all of which (95), have been sold to an investor for £405,000 each, which combined makes £38 million. These will then be rented privately at ridiculous rents which the council will have to help private tenants to pay.

Brent Council responded to a Freedom of Information Act request I sent asking how much money they have spent on housing benefit in the last few years? I found out that in the year 2013/14 Brent Councils rent allowance was £297,612,205! This has increased



Our West Hendon are a group of concerned residents on the West Hendon Estate that believe that the developments taking place benefit private developers at the expense of our community. We fear the development is going to force many people from our community out of the estate and possibly out of London.

drastically from 2011/12 which was £291,299,746. If people were earning a living wage, (which the council have said will cost them £11 million, which is nothing compared to the figures above), there would be less need for people to claim housing benefit, which would therefore reduce the allowance as it would not be as needed. If councils in general start building really affordable 'affordable' housing, housing benefit would again be needed a lot less. Brent Council have told us that another £54 Million pounds worth of cuts are to be carried out next year whilst they propose a

25% increase in councillor's allowances.

Yesterday in Barnet, I attended a demonstration with *Our West Hendon*, that was about the tearing down of 700 homes to build 2000, that would force people to move, lose their council tenancies, and have more investors collecting money at the expense of the residents. These are all examples of thinking of profit before people.

This is the foundation that we need to fight back on; regeneration is creating wealth for investors and the council, at the expense of the residents and communities that have been formed over generations.

An example of an inspirational fight back, is the Focus E15 Mother's campaign, who were evicted from a hostel; the council then tried to move them out of London. After a long time occupying the town hall, the mother's then had a brilliant occupation of some boarded up flats in Stratford that were empty for 8 years, and were in brilliant condition. After staying there for nearly two weeks the campaign left on their own accord. Following this, the campaign has since found out that someone has now moved into one of these flats which is an amazing step!

When fighting for fair housing, something important to remember is that pressure is key. There is no point in holding a demonstration, being quiet for a few months then repeating. These demonstrations and occupations need to be happening more often, we need to show solidarity with all boroughs and let councils know that the pressure will continue, and there will be no giving up.

Fight the Multi-Tier workforce on London's buses By Tony Fox

On Friday 31 October Unite conducted a consultative ballot in its London branch/garages to see if the members would be prepared to take strike action to establish a Sector Wide Collective bargaining forum in London. This followed a rally on 2 October (opposite). Garages voted typically over 80% in favour. The will to fight is there but what of the leadership from Unite?

The case is that there is huge disparity between what bus companies pay in London, Unite explains that:

"The current system has led to many bus drivers being paid up to 25 percent less despite doing the same job for the same employer. The pay some bus drivers receive can be as little as £17,000 depending on the company they work for... London bus companies are required to compete to win routes put out to tender by Transport for London. The explosion in competition has led to an unprecedented squeeze on the

pay, terms and conditions of all bus workers, as individual bus companies choose to bid low to maximise profits at the expense of these dedicated workers."

But we have been here before. In *Socialist Fight No 7*, Autumn 2011, we reported:

At a rally during the campaign for equal pay in July 2008 Peter Kavanagh, then Senior Regional Organiser now Regional Secretary said,

"We have 28,000 organised who, if they get themselves together, if they get themselves together, if they stand shoulder to shoulder they will be one almighty army. We have described London busworkers as a sleeping army, no more, no more, we are on the march, we are organised, we are going to fight anyone that gets in our way, aren't we?"

Chairing the rally, Steve O'Rourke now Chair of the Regional Industrial

Sector Committee (RISC) and London Bus Conference said “We are at round one, we do not expect to go more than round two before we get a knock-out” and elsewhere, “Listen comrades, you know we are not going to achieve this in one year, but this is a campaign, this not a sprint but a marathon”.

That common claim was abandoned by the 2008 annual London Busworkers Conference. Now all the talk was about the abstract “principle” of Central Pay Bargaining without any reference to harmonising pay and conditions and very soon they even stopped talking about that. No explanation was offered to the members. But the reason did appear in a letter from RMT General Secretary Bob Crow posted up in all the garages by Unite branch secretaries; the RMT would no longer represent members on the London buses and RMT busworker members were to rejoin Unite. There was no serious competition to union membership now, Kavanagh’s “almighty army” was left leaderless and as for O’Rourke’s “round two knock-out” the red corner threw in the towel and the blue corner won by a walk-over.

In a series of meetings launching Metroline’s “Core Values” corporatist scheme last Summer, the Convenor, Steve O’Rourke proudly proclaimed in the glossy company handout: “A them and us attitude doesn’t work, if everyone is committed to making this the best place in London to work, we all win and the Core Values help us to do this”.

And what Core Values can magically bridge the gap between capitalism’s drive to maximise profits and the workers’ drive to defend wages and conditions? Why “respect, kindness and trust”, etc. Now who could quarrel with that?

Since the 2008 campaign we have had one “victory”, the one-off 2012 Olympic Bonus payment, which not all drivers got, whilst the companies introduced appalling measures like the two-tier work force with no opposition for Unite whatsoever. New starters are now on far worse pay and conditions; harmonising pay has to start at company and garage level now. These contracts for new starters were frequently negotiated by Regional officials and Convenors, as in Metroline, behind the backs of the Reps let alone the members.

Of course if Unite is serious about a “Sector Wide Collective bargaining forum” it will aim for harmonising the wages and conditions as they said they would do back in 2008. Even then they refused to come up with the actual harmonised conditions and wages in real pounds and pence that could be fought for throughout London, demonstrating they were only going through the motions and had no intention of fighting for this at all.

But they are not even asking for that now, they would have to start by fighting the multi-tier wage system they have allowed to develop again since 2009 to enhance the bus companies profitability. The situation on multi-tier wages is now almost as bad as it was in 2000 when the CentreWest strike, begun in Westbourne Park garage, reversed the trend in all London.

Until capitalism’s crisis of profit emerged in 2008 and they began to marshal the union bureaucracy more solidly in their defence. So they have no intention of fighting the multi-tier wage system; it is not even mentioned in the current campaign. Unless a real rank and file body such as the Grass Roots Left emerges in the London buses and elsewhere the bureaucracy will put up a token show and give up as they did in 2008-9

To win struggles like this a rank and file movement is necessary and that is the Grass Roots Left. London busworkers need to fight for these demands:

1. Renationalise the buses
2. End competitive tendering
3. Harmonise the wages and conditions throughout London
4. Build the Grass Roots Left on the London buses



Mike Banda 1930-2014 Obituary

By Gerry Downing 15 October 2014

Mike Banda (Michael Van Der Poorten), the former General Secretary of the Workers Revolutionary Party, died on August 29 aged 84. Corinne Lotz fills us in on his early life:

“Mike Banda attended the elite Trinity College in Ceylon’s (now Sri Lanka) second largest city, Kandy. Due in part to the influence of Hilary Abeyaratne, an inspirational teacher at the school, he and his younger brother Tony became activists in the Trotskyist Bolshevik Party of India, Ceylon and Burma (BLPI) whilst in their teens.

The BLPI merged with the larger Lanka Sama Samaja party in 1950 to become a section of the world Trotskyist movement, the Fourth International. It was at this time that the Van der Poorten brothers departed for Britain where they joined the Group, as the British section of the Fourth International was known at the time.” [1]

Mike and his brother Tony arrived in Eng-

land sometime in 1950 or 51 and immediately reported for duty as Trotskyists to Gerry Healy, whose apparent uncritical supporters they remained until 1985 when the WRP expelled Healy with their belated assistance and they then renounced Trotskyism (“Trotskyism was not a golden thread (of continuity - GD) but a rotten rope” Tony Banda opined in late 1985).

Forty years before his own death Mike wrote an obituary for another Trotskyist, James P Cannon, who died in August 21, 1974. In it he sought to prove that Cannon and the US SWP had little historically to offer the world Trotskyist movement and that the WRP and the ICFI, historically and at that time, represented the continuity of Trotskyism. He describes the major event that led to the birth of world Trotskyism when Cannon and Maurice Spector of Canada became Trotskyists in page 15 of his

pamphlet *James P Cannon – a critical assessment* thus:

As a delegate to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, Cannon went to Moscow *as usual preoccupied with American problems*. By a rare quirk of history he was appointed to the Comintern’s Programme Commission where by some bureaucratic error Trotsky’s ‘*Criticism of the Draft Programme*’, elaborated by Stalin and Bukharin fell into his hands with the effect of a thunderbolt:



Cannon smuggled the Trotsky document out of Russia. This document constituted the basis of the organization of the Left Opposition in the US. It is however a debatable point whether Cannon realized the real significance of Trotsky's critique. *He never subsequently explained what 'doubts' were resolved by the 'criticism'. It is more probable that Cannon, representing a class-struggle tendency in the party, could not reach a compromise with Foster and Lovestone, – who were supported by Stalin, and that this drove him empirically to seek the help of Trotsky.* To say this, however, is not to disparage the sterling labours of Cannon, Dunne, Skoglund, Swaback and others in propagating, at the risk of assault and expulsion, the seminal ideas of Trotskyism in America.” (our emphasis). [2]

But that account in the italicised passages above is to disparage and denigrate every struggle for Trotskyism in the USA (until Trotsky and his true heir, Gerry Healy, appeared on the scene to put matters right) and portray it in the worst possible light. Cannon did not understand what was going on in the USSR initially, what a backward fellow! And then, when he did read Trotsky's *Criticism of the Draft Programme* and said he agreed with it, as did Maurice Spector, he probably did not agree with it at all and only pretended to do so! He would have capitulated to Stalin, Bukharin, Foster and Lovestone if he could and he was only driven to “empirically to seek the help of Trotsky” by base motives of protecting his own domain in his backward “class-struggle tendency” within the CP! David North may well expose Banda's post 1985 charlatanry in *The Heritage we Defend* against Banda's repudiation of Trotskyism in his 27 Reasons [3] but he is silent on this far earlier hackish repudiation of every ‘Trotskyism’ except that of Gerry Healy in 1974.

There is never a suggestion in the SLL/WRP of the “seething internal democracy” of the Bolsheviks that Trotsky spoke of. All votes had to be unanimous; if not the oppositionists were hauled before Healy to retract their votes. We have the evidence of the Socialist Labour League's internal regime at the time from the 1959 resignation letter of Peter Fryer. It is outrageous to propose that the following extract could describe a party or regime which represented the continuity of Trotskyism:

“We who came into the Trotskyist movement from the Communist Party, hard on the heels of the experience of Hungary and our struggle with the Stalinist bureaucracy in Britain, were assured that in the Trotskyist movement we would find a genuine communist movement, where democracy flourished, where dissenters were encouraged to express their dissent, and where relationships between comrades were in all respects better, more brotherly and more human than in the party we had come from. Instead we have found at the top of the Trotskyist movement, despite the sacrifices and hard work of the rank and

file, a repetition of Communist Party methods of work, methods of leadership, and methods of dealing with persons who are not prepared to kowtow to the superior wisdom of the “strong man”.

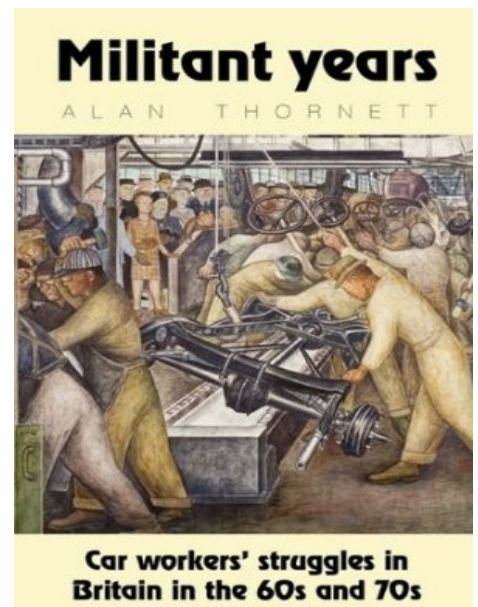
This state of affairs had not improved over the years. In a sense the politics of Banda's assessment of Cannon is a product of the way the struggle was fought against Brian Behan and the major working class base won from the CP in 1957-8 and in the early 70s against Alan Thornett and the car workers around Cowley, Oxford.

They were expelled before the conference (the constitution had just been changed to deny them the right to appeal to it) by the time-worn Stalinist tactic of ‘re-registration of the membership’; all suspects had to sign a document denouncing the opposition or they were no longer members.

It was clearly a left split of serious revolutionaries who did wage a fight for Trotskyism for the next eight years, up to their political collapse to right centrism in 1982 over the Malvinas war. The charges of disloyalty to the party are spurious, who is obliged to be loyal to a party which treats its members in the manner described by Peter Fryer above and who intimidates and physically assaults both its own members and political opponents as a matter of course?

Mike Banda publicly apologised to Tony Richardson for the beating he got at the WRP centre in 1974 after the 1985 expulsion of Healy which acknowledged that he lied to the party in those two appalling documents he produced against the Cowley oppositions at the time, *A Menshevik Unmasked* and *The Anti-Party nature of the Thornett slander campaign*:

After the 1985 split the question of Messali Hadj and the MNA was one of the central issues bothering Mike Banda when I visited him. He was then in the throes of a breakdown following Healy's expulsion. He gave me a pamphlet, *The Algerian Revolution* by Messali Hadj (1956) with an introduction by Peter James entirely uncritical of Hadj and with no class analysis whatsoever of the nature of this ‘revolution’; “the Algerian revolution is now developing at a rapid pace... For the Algerian revolution is no more than an extension of the Asian revolution into the continent of North Africa” he tells us in fine Pabloite style in paragraph two of his introduction. Banda revealed that he had escaped death in the mid 1950s by barely an hour in Paris when he arrived to discuss with Hadj's followers only to find them assassinated by the FLN. This was during the Café Wars between the MNA and the FLN, which the latter won in France and Algeria. Banda's complaint was that the IC had capitulated to the wrong petty-bourgeois nationalists. He had abandoned Trotskyism far earlier than 1985, he had not understood



the degeneration of the Fourth International after the relatively orthodox Second Conference of 1948. He had been living a lie in his latter years.

But nothing prepared me for the *Letter to Liborio Justo* from Mike Banda in June 1992, reprinted in *What Next* by Bob Pitt in 2002 which I only read after the funeral. It is shocking beyond belief, not a word of sympathy for the Palestinians, everything for the ‘oppressed’ Zionists against them. Look at the following passage:

“Hitler's aim was to expel the Jews. The Nazis even collaborated with the Zionists in transporting Jews to Palestine...”

Nobody, except the Zionists – who remain authentic Jewish nationalists – wanted Israel. The British made a small gesture in the Balfour Declaration but quickly reneged on it when the Arab feudalists complained. The US sponsored Israel but not out of love for Jews, only as a bulwark against the twin threats of Soviet expansionism and Arab nationalism, i.e. Nasserism. Predictably, with the receding of these two threats the US now openly woos the Arab states and calls for the return of all Palestinians to Israel.” [4]

This is extracted from the full article in the Socialist Fight blog here: <http://socialistfight.com/2014/10/15/mike-banda-obituary/>

Notes

[1] *Mike Banda* (1930-2014) Corinna Lotz 14 September 2014, <http://www.aworldtowin.net/resources/MikeBanda.html>

[2] *James P Cannon a critical assessment* by Michael Banda, p. 15.

[3] *The ICFI Defends Trotskyism, 1982 -1986, Documents of the Struggle against the WRP Renegades*, http://www.wsws.org/en/IML/fi_vol13_no2/fi_vol13_no2_full.html

[4] *A Letter to Liborio Justo*, Mike Banda, June 1992. <http://www.whatnextjournal.org.uk/Pages/Back/Wnext26/Banda.html>

Film Review: *Pride*, Genre, Comedy, Drama, Running time 120 min, Director, Matthew Warchus, Screen writer, Stephen Beresford, Actors include Ben Schnetzer, Abram Rooney, George MacKay, Imelda Staunton, Bill Nighy and Dominic West By Steve Forrest, Secretary Brent and Harrow LRC (personal capacity)

The film *Pride* is a thoroughly enjoyable film that demonstrates that a political message can be delivered with a real sense of entertainment. The writer and director, none of whom are interestingly from a left wing political persuasion, achieve this and much more. This is the context in which we need to view this thoroughly enjoyable piece of film making. The cast is a who's who of the British cinema including Imelda Staunton, Bill Nighy and Dominic West and the acting really takes the piece along at a great clip. You will, most particularly at the end, require a Kleenex watching this film. A great achievement.

The issues it raises are fascinating and of vital importance especially during the 30th anniversary of the miners' strike. It is at the same time a reminder of our past, our present and our future. The miners' strike was the praetorian guard of our movement engaged in the most momentous and historic struggle to defend their way of life, their jobs and to stop the flow of neo liberalism being imposed by Thatcher in the UK and Reagan in the USA.

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community at that time were a persecuted minority in British society, a long way from the position of today, although we have to make the point that that struggle is a fight not yet won. In Britain the LGBT community is still discriminated against in many ways and genuine equality is some way off. Globally as *The Economist* pointed out on the 11th October "five countries still execute gay people: Iran hangs them; Saudi Arabia stones them. Gay sex is illegal in 78 countries, and a few have recently passed laws that make gay life even grimmer."

The key message of this film although done in an entertaining way is that solidarity works and is an important cornerstone of a society worth living in. This is a story of how the LGBT community set up the support group Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM). In total from its inception in the summer of 1984 and first collection at the London Gay Pride march LGSM raised £20,000 to support the miners. In particular from the pit village of Onllwyn, deep in the Welsh valleys.

This concept of the importance of solidarity is summed up by one of the films' key characters, Mark Ashton the founder of the LGSM, when he says. "One community should give solidarity to another. It's really illogical to say: 'I'm gay and I'm into defending the gay community but I don't care about anything else.'"

We have to put on record that Mark Ashton in

real life was in fact a convinced socialist activist and became the General Secretary of the YCL until he was sadly taken by the horror of the aids virus at the young age of 27. However, in remembering Mark the film actually works better in that it doesn't focus on any pre conceived political positions or activism.

The story unfolds as a reaction to events and that's how it powerfully demonstrates the joining in solidarity of the two communities. For example Mark, who we know was a convinced socialist, is shown in the film spontaneously reacting to TV coverage of the miners being attacked on the picket lines by the police and the realisation that each struggle is a common one.

That is the inspiration for the establishment of the LGSM. Once established the LGSM are seen being scorned and rejected by the NUM and that there is a prejudice within the mining community that is a great obstacle to overcome. That is shown as the impetus for the group in a really well worked scene randomly picking out a pit village in South Wales from an atlas.

This turns out to be Onllwyn and the community that the film shows through many trials and struggles forged an unbreakable bond.

However, although it is beyond doubt that a prejudice existed amongst the NUM at that time there is also the fact the union's funds would have been sequestered and any group in ringing the unions national office and handing over cash would have been rejected for legal reasons.

But if the film had emphasised that aspect it couldn't have built its central theme of the overcoming of the boundaries and prejudices between the two communities and the building of an unbreakable bond of struggle. On that account it is a very moving piece.

This loyalty is powerfully shown at the end of the film, sorry to spoil it for those that have not seen it, with the arrival at the Gay Pride march of 1985 of coaches after coaches of all the miners lodges



Buckets at the ready: The Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners group at the centre of *Pride*. Photo: Supplied

from South Wales. In a memorable scene the names of the pits are read out as miners are disembarking the coaches. Then the miners and LGSM activists move to the head of the march and the police from a passive role move into a combat stance.

This underlines what took place in reality as the NUM put themselves at the head of the battle in the Labour Party for gay rights. At the 1985 Labour Party conference in Bournemouth, a resolution committing Labour to support LGBT rights passed for the first time due to block voting support from the NUM.

One of the key moments in the film which really demonstrates the coming together of the two communities in struggle is the "pits and perverts" benefit gig held at the electric ballroom Camden in December 1984. It was headlined by Bronski Beat a top group at the time headed by Jimmy Somerville.

It was a direct reaction to the Sun's disgusting homophobic headline "perverts support the pits" which was designed to attack and undermine the miners and the LGBT community. Showing the reality of solidarity it had the opposite effect and electrified the fight for the common cause and the money and supporters poured in.

A group of the Welsh women come to London to attend and help at the concert and one says the only pop star I have ever met before is Max Boyce, the popular Welsh rugby comedian and entertainer. This really demonstrates what is the real skill of the film's creators to combine humour and entertainment in delivering this powerful message of solidarity.

On all levels it really is a must see.



Solidarity: Steph (Faye Marsay), Joe (George MacKay), Mark (Ben Schnetzer), Mike (Joseph Gilgun), Dai (Paddy Considine), Carl (Kyle Rees) and Gary (Jack Baggs) in a scene from *Pride*.

Labour Representation Committee Left Motions and Left Slate

<p>Socialist Fight supports the motions here and a few others like; No. 9: Justice for Irish Victims of State Terror, No. 11: NCP on SARU and No 14, Decimalise Sex Work. We strongly oppose No. 12: Support Ukraine Solidarity Campaign as it advocates support for a far right, fascist infested government in Ukraine installed with the funding and logistic assistance of the CIA and US/EU imperialism. It is a disgraceful national chauvinist motion.</p> <p>We endorse the left slate here fighting for a consistent opposition to ALL cuts and to Labour councillors who vote for them and consistent anti-imperialism: the main enemy is ALWAYS at home!</p>	<p>Brent and Harrow nominations for the LRC AGM were: Vice-Chair: Bridget Dunne, Judy Atkinson Treasure: Graham Bash Political Secretary: Graham Durham Membership Secretary: Norette Moore</p> <p>Web Manager: Mick Brooks LRC NC: Gerry Downing, George Shaw LGBT member: Olly Coxhead BME member: Carol Foster Youth member: Daniel Brooks</p> <p>Labour Briefing Editorial Board: Olly Coxhead, Graham Durham, Bridget Dunne, Gerry Downing, Steve Forrest, George Shaw</p>
<p>Grass Roots Left Motion: This AGM salutes the courage of the Focus E15 mothers in occupying four flats in the Carpenter Estate in Newham. This revolutionary action highlights the deepening housing crisis; in 2011 the government estimated there were “20,000 squatters in the UK” and “650,000 empty properties”.</p> <p>One third of ex-council homes are owned by wealthy landlords like Charles Gow, son of former Tory minister Ian Gow, almost all are let out to councils at exorbitant rents, adding to the housing bubble and enormously increasing housing benefits paid to Rachmanite speculators like Gow; increasing waiting lists and forcing more into the under-regulated private rented sector. Ed Miliband’s pledge to build 200,000 homes (not council) a year by 2020 is well below the rate of household creation.</p> <p>We demand that a Labour Government:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abolish the Right-to-Buy, Stock-Transfers and sale of Community buildings and public spaces. 2. Begin a programme of building council housing at rents tied to earnings and not 80% of the free market. 3. Work with local homeless groups to requisition empty properties and develop council run temporary accommodation properties. 4. Immediately operate Rent Tribunals and serve prohibition orders on rental accommodation deemed not fit for human habitation. 5. Abolish the bedroom tax and benefits cap. 6. Reinstate secure tenancy agreements, abolish short term contracts. 7. Repeal the 2012 Act criminalising squatting in residential property. Squatting is a fundamental right since the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381, the Diggers in the English Civil War and after WWII when so many were homeless. 	<p>Socialist Fight Motion: This AGM opposes the bombing of ISIS in Iraq and Syria by the US-led coalition on ‘humanitarian’ or any other basis. We recognise that the main goal of ALL US military adventures is to secure new areas of investment for its finance houses and their linked transnational corporations following ‘regime change’.</p> <p>The al-Nusra Front and ISIS were massively funded by US imperialism via its allies to overthrow Assad. The central war aim of the US remains regime change and dismemberment of Libya, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, Russia and China.</p> <p>We condemn Miliband and Labour MPs who voted for the bombing and salute the 43 opponents. For a massive anti-war movement! The main enemy is still at home!</p> <p>We are for victory of those forces now genuinely fighting imperialism; Syria, NovoRússia and Palestine.</p> <p>The global working class and all humanity require the defeat of US-led imperialist forces; only by forming a united front to fight for these can workers in imperialist and semi-colonial lands raise their class consciousness to overthrow its own capitalists. Local tyrants now obliged to fight imperialism would betray the masses again tomorrow if given a chance.</p> <p>Only by the victory of the working class conquering state power via an economy planned for human need and not profit can humanity avoid the terrible prospect that US aggression promises; WWII.</p> <p>For multiethnic militias of workers and oppressed peoples with no religious divisions in the Middle East to drive out imperialism and advance the struggle for workers and peasants governments!</p>
<p>Brent and Harrow LRC Motion: This AGM agrees to affiliate to Solidarity with the Antifascist Resistance in Ukraine and disaffiliate from the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are opposed to UK, US, NATO backing for the far-right Kiev regime and EU/IMF austerity imposed on Ukraine. • We demand justice for those massacred in Odessa, Mariupol, during the so-called ‘ATO’. • We oppose the attacks on democratic rights and plans to ban the KPU and Communist ideology. • We support the antifascist resistance in Ukraine. <p>We recognise Fascism as the mortal enemy of the organised working class. We recognise that US Imperialism/NATO manoeuvres in Ukraine in its own interests. US hegemony is threatened by trade between the BRICS nations and the ultimate goal is the breakup of Russia.</p> <p>We condemn the so-called “anti-terror campaign” carried out by the Kiev regime against the civilians of the Donbass, 3,000 dead to date, and the arming of the regime by NATO/imperialism.</p> <p>We stand for the smashing of the fascist battalions.</p> <p>We condemn the sanctions on Russia and blaming the downing of MH17 on the militias without evidence.</p> <p>We condemn any attempts by Moscow, Washington and the EU to sell-out the self—determination of the Donbass.</p> <p>At the same time as Western governments keep silent and support the murderous Kiev regime so does part of the European left which refuses to call for the defeat of NATO and for victory of anti-fascists in Ukraine. The TUC passed the RMT motion on Ukraine, recognising the role of fascism and NATO.</p>	<p>Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group Motion: This AGM condemns the torture of Irish Republican Prisoners, in particular that of Gavin Coyle and forcible strip-searching of three women Republican POWs in Hydebank; Christine Connor, Sharon Rafferty and Nuala Gormley.</p> <p>Gavin Coyle sent this message to the IRPSG: “They attempted to recruit me (in April 2011) as an informer which I refused... I was taken to Maghaberry Goal and placed in isolation where I remain to this day.” We demand Gavin is immediately released from isolation and put amongst his comrades in Roe 4 in Maghaberry.</p> <p>We condemn judicial frame-up of the Craigavon Two, Brendan McConville and John Paul Wootton. They were convicted by a no-jury Diplock court in 2009. Defence lawyers point out the prosecution case was based on circumstantial evidence, mainly from witness M, well known as a “Walter Mitty” character whose evidence was totally unreliable. There is no evidence that they had participated in any event leading to the death of Constable Stephen Carroll. Four TDs; Mick Wallace, Clare Daly, Maureen O’Sullivan and Eamon O’Cuiv and Gerry Conlon (Guilford 4) attended their appeal. This AGM supports the Justice for the Craigavon Two Campaign.</p> <p>On Maghaberry we demand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restriction on movement of prisoners within their wing An end to day and night time lock-ups An end to strip searching A new cubicle layout to maximise privacy An end to the fingerprinting and photographing of children A play park, complete with swings and slides

LGBT liberation, class struggle and the hypocrisy of imperialism

By John Barry

There has been much exposure recently in the western media on the rights of LGBT people in Russia. In fact the whole run up to the Sochi Winter Olympics and the Games itself were mired in controversy around the issue. The focus has been on legislation passed by the Russian Duma which prohibits 'gay propaganda', a law which is supposed to protect children from paedophiles but also singles out homosexuals as a corrupting influence. This controversy was one of course created by the western media, who not so many years ago were witch hunting and berating people because of their sexual orientation.

Now of course the liberal West likes to portray itself as the champion of gay rights and human rights in general, against what is presented to their populations as less civilised and tolerant countries. For most people in 'less civilised' countries the reality is somewhat different, especially if you happen to get bombed daily by drones in Pakistan, have suffered years of violent occupation in Afghanistan or the north of Ireland. LGBT people are one of the most oppressed groups in society and most countries take a very harsh attitude to those who carry out same sex relations.

Indeed most of the British Commonwealth criminalises homosexuality, recently India made gay sex a criminal offence, yet the Commonwealth Games does not find itself courting the same controversy. Why then does the West focus on LGBT rights in Russia? In Russia gay sex is actually legal unlike most countries including America's ally Saudi Arabia where homosexuality is punishable by flogging or execution, the last executions for homosexuality were reported in 2002 when three gay men were beheaded.^[1]

The focus on this by the West, its enlightened liberal politicians and its host of ego-centric celebrities is more to do with the need by US imperialism to cause the destabilisation of Russia through NGO's backed by the CIA and the carving up of Russia to open all its assets and resources to US finance capital.

However it is true that Russian society is deeply conservative and homophobic. Marxists must understand the material reasons which have led to the current deep fear of homosexuality in Russia.

Historically over the past century the current level of homophobia in Russia is fairly new. Indeed after the great October Socialist Revolution the Bolshevik workers' government decriminalised homosexuality, abortion



A pro-LGBT rights "Rainbow flash mob" that took place on International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, in Saint Petersburg, 2009.

and introduced no-fault divorce.^[2] An open and rational view was taken toward homosexuality by the new Soviet government; the Bolsheviks also understood that the construction of socialism required the end of the oppressive bourgeois family.

Progressive organisations such as the World League of Sexual Reform looked toward the Soviet Union as a model for sexual reform and Soviet delegates were sent to several international conferences in the 1920s regarding sexology.^[3] During that decade a young Bolshevik, Gregorii Batkis, in his graduate studies at the Moscow university wrote a pamphlet which was translated to German *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*, in which he stated homosexuality was treated in the Soviet union in the same way as so-called natural intercourse.^[4]

There was of course prejudice remaining from the past, the Orthodox Church still held huge power over the minds of many Russian peasants and those former members of the petty bourgeoisie, judges and criminologists showed antipathy towards homosexuality. However as in many spheres of life the Soviet government was attempting to encourage a materialist based rational and scientific understanding of the world despite the huge devastation of civil war, backwardness of the peasantry and economic hardships.

The socialist revolution could not remain isolated in one country and a backward one at that, the Soviet state degenerated under conditions of lagging world revolution and the rule of the conservative bureaucracy who

made a virtue of 'socialism in one country' rather than a temporary necessity. With the defeat of the revolutionary internationalist Left Opposition by the early 1930s, conservative patriarchy once again became the dominant norm in the Soviet Union, coupled with a desire to increase the population and reproach the Orthodox Church.

In this environment homosexuality was again criminalised by the conservative bureaucracy in 1933, punishable by 5 years hard labour or prison. All kinds of lies were then used to justify persecution of LGBT people, from homosexuality being a disease, mental illness, fascist perversion and decadent bourgeois lifestyle choice.^[5] The roots of modern homophobia in Russia stem from this.

The current wave of homophobia is also in tandem with nationalism and anti-immigrant rhetoric, videos have been posted by far right groups for several years now showing immigrants from former soviet republics being tortured or killed, this has now happened to some perceived as gay. The fear in Russia of a growth in the immigrant populations from former Soviet Republics and the low birth rate among Russians has led to attacks on non-procreation sex, particularly by the powerful Orthodox Church which during the Soviet period was a favourite cause for the West to support.^[6]

The growth in these reactionary forces has been the result of the collapse of the planned economy of the USSR and the onslaught of savage gangster capitalism of the 1990s, which although now passed into a more stable period still wrenches up reactionary ideas

LGBT liberation

and prejudice for survival. While Putin has fairly moderate and tolerant views on the subject he leans on the Orthodox Church and bourgeois public opinion for his political survival pandering to traditional values and social conservatism.

In a country like Russia the Western imperialists are correctly associated with the Yeltsin spearheaded return of capitalism in the 1990s in which millions suffered as society was torn apart, anything associated with the West such as LGBT equality is seen negatively especially given the social conservatism and the aggressive nature of world imperialism which today is dominated by the US and its NATO allies resting on the liberal ideology of 'regime change' in order to bring 'freedom and democracy' and 'human rights' to what is presented as less civilised nations.

The rights of LGBT people were of course fought for against huge opposition by the ruling class, the struggle was taken up mainly by trade unions and the labour movement and were not handed down to us by the liberal bourgeoisie. It was less than 30 years ago that Britain was a far more homophobic country and Thatcher's government introduced the notorious Section 28 of the local government act which prohibited the promotion of homosexuality as a normal relation, no different to the current Russian policy.

Condemning Russia for homophobia is total hypocrisy, in 13 US states homosexual acts are still illegal,^[7] as is the case in their client states of Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia to mention two, in the latter of which homosexuality can be punished by execution, as we mentioned above.

Many of the social liberals on the left who like to pose as Marxists have given support to the imperialist hypocrisy, using it as another reason to attack Russia which is currently facing the threat of huge military aggression from the West, just as some had supported the invasion of Afghanistan in 2002 in the name of women's rights. We cannot know the extent of persecution of LGBT people in semi-colonial and oppressed countries, some of the reports could be imperialist propaganda or misrepresentations.

Another important factor we must take into account is that liberalism places labels on people partly as bourgeois sociological practice to divide the working class but also to create niche markets for commercial consumption. Thus advertisements for a lifestyle or goods aimed at the 'pink pound' alienates

people who experiment or experience homosexual attraction or relationships but do not feel that they fit into these labels, nor do they desire to.

Therefore the West's version of 'gay rights' is a liberal discourse which imperialism is attempting to impose on people in oppressed countries who will not understand or cannot conceive. Socialists fight for sexual freedom and sex education, which should be part of our demands in oppressed countries. It is not possible to eradicate decades and centuries of isolation, oppressive thought, clericalism, and backward ideas overnight, revolutionary transformation takes much longer and requires the development of the highest material and scientific technique at the disposal of society.

The lefts who support the liberal idea that formal equality in law alone as the means to end special oppression are hopelessly pandering to reformism and their own imperialist ruling class. While of course these laws are important to reduce or prevent harassment by the police or protect LGBT people from state persecution they do not bring about liberation from this society. The Gay Liberation Manifesto of 1971 stated 'gay liberation does not just mean reforms. It means a revolutionary change in our whole society.'^[8]

Early LGBT activists understood that it was capitalism and class society which oppressed them relying as it does on marriage and the nuclear family to help reproduce its class relations and productive system. Now the liberals are using formal equality to create a new straightjacket for LGBT people; gay marriage as a means to the nuclear family, middle class lifestyle and successful careers.

Capitalism will always try to buy off the specially oppressed groups in society whether it is women, black people or gays.

The Imperialist Pink Pound

MARKETING TO GAY CONSUMERS: GAY RIGHTS CHARITY STONEWALL SETS OUT ITS 10-POINT GUIDE

1. **Incorporate** gay people into mainstream campaigns – this reaches gay people, their friends and family, and ethical consumers guided by a business' behaviour.
2. **Research** the needs and preferences of your lesbian, gay and bisexual consumers to identify opportunities.
3. **Consult** with your gay staff, service users and community groups: they can help develop communications strategies.
4. **Gay people** are young, old, male and female. Tokenistic visuals that ambiguously try to appeal to gay consumers rather than being explicit about including gay people ring hollow.
5. **Engage** with gay communities by aligning yourself with local and national community groups and events.
6. **Deliver** what you promise. Make sure your frontline staff are trained to deliver an inclusive service and ensure your equalities policies apply equally to gay employees.
7. **Senior business leaders** should be engaged and on board.
8. **Measure success** of outreach campaigns among gay consumers and use this to develop future initiatives.
9. **Respond robustly** to any negative reactions to maintain the loyalty of gay consumers.
10. **Stay consistent** – businesses that invest in sustained relationships with gay consumers are more likely to be rewarded with a big market share.



LGBT activists should reject the idea of marriage as a means of ending oppression and while we support all laws which provide equal rights, marriage is a pillar of capitalism.

While there is nothing wrong with monogamy if that is what a couple choose, marriage means the state recognises it as the only valued or legitimate means of raising a family.

It also expects it to be for life, which is hypocritical. There are people in non-nuclear families such as single parents or families in shared accommodation or in refugees who will be affected more than others by austerity, these workers are not recognised by the state as legitimate families. Trotsky in response to a question on the Soviet government and family relations posed by an American magazine said: "If one understands by "family" ideal monogamy-not in the legal but in the actual sense-then the Bolsheviks could not destroy what never was nor is on earth, barring fortunate exceptions."^[9]

The current campaigns focussing on gay marriage ignore the important issues facing

Lesbian gay bisexual and transgender liberation

all the working class some of which will affect LGBT workers and women the most, such as massive cuts to the benefit system, privatisation of the NHS, reduction of support to voluntary groups which provide sex education and sexual health awareness and provision.

The tasks of revolutionary socialists is to unite workers' in common class interests to break down the artificial barriers of nation, race, gender and sexual orientation and build an international proletarian party to lead the working class for socialist revolution. The victory of the working class in overthrowing capitalism is the only means to human liberation in all spheres of life including sexual relations. The defeat of imperialism is therefore the upmost importance to defeat capitalism and build socialism, harnessing technical and material resources in planned co-operation for the benefit of humanity.

The current attacks from imperialism on Russia regarding LGBT rights are similar to the hypocritical arguments used by British imperialism against German imperialism in World War One, fighting for democracy against tyranny, or Hitler's argument that 'civilised' Germany was saving Poland from the barbarism of Pilsudski. Imperialism needs to strangle and plunder the semi-oppressed countries such as Russia and Syria. This requires that revolutionaries give conditional support of semi- oppressed countries in order to defeat

world imperialism which is the foremost enemy of the working class and those who suffer special oppression such as LGBT people.

Notes

- [1] Whitaker, B., The Guardian, *Saudi Arabia's juggling act on homosexuality*, 13 Sept 2010, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/sep/13/saudi-arabia-homosexuality-juggling-act
- [2] *LGBT history in Russia*, accessed at En.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_history_in_Russia
- [3] Daniel Healy (1993), *The Russian Revolution and the Decriminalisation of Homosexuality*, p26-54, p37 accessed at disciplinas.stoa.usp.br/pluginfile.php/67226/mod_resource/contact/1/Homosexuality_Decriminalization_Russian_Revolution.pdf
- [4] Daniel Healy (1993), p36
- [5] *LGBT history in Russia*, accessed at En.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_history_in_Russia
- [6] See discussion on this subject in Daily Kos, *Understanding Russia's homophobia*, by pico, Aug 12 2013, at www.dailykos.com/story/2013/08/12/1228471/-Understanding-Russia-s-homophobia#
- [7] 76crimes.com
- [8] *Gay Liberation Front : Manifesto*, London, 1971, revised 1978, Internet History Sourcebooks Project, at www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/glf-london.asp
- [9] Trotsky, L., *Family Relations Under the Soviets, Women and the Family*, 1973, Pathfinder Press, New York, p53



Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group

PO Box 59188, London,
NW2 9LJ
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Irish-Republican-Prisoners-Support-Group-London/>



Updated List of POWs

Maghaberry Prison
Old Road
Ballinderry Upper
Lisburn
BT28 2PT
Roe 4

Joe Barr
Brian Cavan
Barry Concannon
Gavin Coyle (CSU)
Jason Ceulman
Anthony Davidson
Colin Duffy

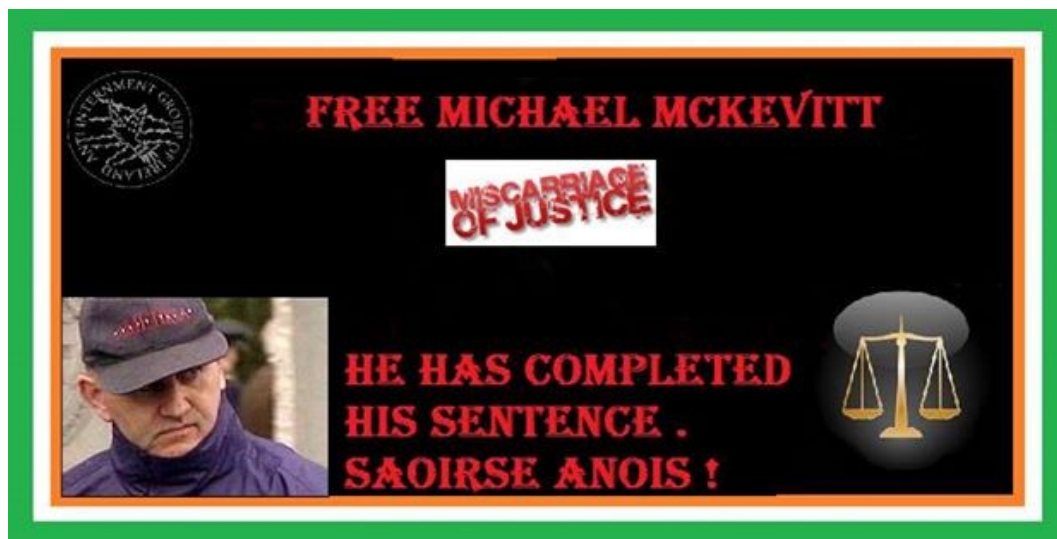
Dominic Dynes
Harry Fitzsimons
Damien Harkin
Neil Hegarty
Seamus Kearney
Martin Kelly
Sean Kelly
Nathan Hastings
Brendan McConville
Sean McConville
Alex McCrory
Anthony McDonnell
Mark McGuigan
Ryan McKenna
DD McLaughlin
Seamus McLaughlin
Gerard McManus
Sean McVeigh
Kevin Barry Nolan

Christopher O Kane
Brian Sheridan
Kieran Smith
Kevin Vernon
John Paul Wotton
Female Republican Wing
Hydebank Wood
Hospital Road
BT8 8NAHydebank

Sharon Rafferty
Nuala Gormley
Christine Connor

Portlaoise Gaol
Portlaoise
County Laois
E3 Portlaoise Gaol

Kevin Braney
John Brock
Ciaran Burke
Desmond Christie
Sean Connolly
Bernard Dempsey
Dean Evans
Sean Farrell
Cormac Fitzpatrick
David Jordan
Nick Kendall
Nick McBennett
Jim McCormick
Edward McGrath
Stephen McGowan
Declan Phelan
Brian Walsh Dublin
Brian Walsh Cork



Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group

PO Box 59188, London, NW2 9LJ, irpsgroup@gmail.com

Statement from Republican Political Prisoners, Roe House, Maghaberry Jail, Co Antrim

Republican Political Prisoners, Roe House, Maghaberry, wish to clarify the current position of the planned downgrade to our already unacceptable visiting conditions which we have highlighted recently.

On Thursday 16th October 2014, Republican Political Prisoners' representatives met with the jail governors who informed us that there would be no changes made to our current visiting arrangements and the proposed downgrade would not be imposed. When pressed about the need for a modern visiting facility with privacy at its core, the governors simply stated that, at present, nothing was to change to our visiting area and there would not be a refurbishment.

This is neither a victory nor a resolu-

tion. The current visiting arrangements remain unacceptable. We have made clear and unambiguous recommendations for visiting conditions in our 'Conditions Document', to which family life and privacy are central.

The visits issue will not be resolved until these recommendations are implemented and respect and fair treatment are afforded to us and our families.

Republican Political Prisoners
Roe House, Maghaberry Jail,
Co Antrim, 23rd October 2014

For confirmation
Sinn Féin Poblachtach
Republican Sinn Féin
r-phoist: saoirse@iol.ie
fón: +353 (0) 1 8729747 / 00353-87-9374277

223 Sráid Pharnell
Baile Átha Cliath 1
223 Parnell Street, Dublin 1

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Department of
Justice
www.dojni.gov.uk

Minister's Office Block B,
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3SG
Tel: 028 9052 8121
private.office@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk

Our ref: COR/586/2014

Mr Gerry Downing
Secretary
Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group
PO Box 59188
LONDON
NW2 9LJ

2 September 2014

Dear Mr. Downing

Your letter dated 26 June 2014 to Chris Grayling was forwarded to me as Minister of Justice for reply.

In January 2014 a new pilot Searching Policy was introduced for woman prisoners. Under the new Policy woman prisoners are no longer routinely full searched and will only receive a full search if there is suspicion; or if intelligence has been received to suggest that they have concealed items.

Christine Connor, Sharon Rafferty and Nuala Gormley have never been forcibly full searched in Hydebank Wood Prison.

Yours
DAVID FORD MLA
Minister of Justice

Building a fair, just and safer community

Letter to Michael Holden and IRPSG from Gavin Coyle

7/8/14.

GAVIN COYLE
ROE 4 PRISONER
IN ISOLATION.

MICHAEL A CHARA,
IM WRITING TO SAY THANK YOU FOR THE AUG/SEP EDITION OF SF AND THANK YOU FOR HIGHLIGHTING MY CASE AND THOSE OF OTHER REPUBLICANS WITHIN THE OCCUPIED SIX COUNTIES.

I TAKE IT YOU NEVER RECEIVED MY REPLY TO A LETTER YOU SENT ON THE 12-4-14? THIS WOULD COME AS NO GREAT SHOCK TO ME AS THIS IS ONE OF MANY MIND GAMES EMPLOYED BY THIS FOOLISH ADMINISTRATION TO KEEP ME ISOLATED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

I'VE SPOKEN TO A REP FROM I.R.P.U.A THIS MORNING WHO IS MANOY DUFFY AND I EXPRESSED MY FEELINGS ABOUT BOTH PARTIES MAKING CONTACT AND I EXPLAINED SF TO HER AND ITS CONTENT. SHE WAS VERY PLEASED WITH WHAT SHE HAD HEARD AND WAS GOING TO SEND YOU AN EMAIL TO MAKE THIS CONTACT. MO CHARA THIS WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL TO US AND IT WOULD STRENGTHEN OUR GAOL STRUGGLE AND FOCUS THE WORLD'S EYE ON THE TORTURE OF IRISH REPUBLICAN PRISONERS AT THE HANDS OF OUR BRITISH CAPTORS.

I HOPE BY THE TIME YOU RECEIVE THIS (IF YOU DO) THAT MAYBE SOME CONTACT HAS BEEN MADE AND MAYBE MORE REGULAR LETTERS ETC CAN BE SENT TO KEEP YOU UPDATED ON EVENTS AS THEY ARISE.

WELL MICHAEL MY OWN SITUATION IS STILL PRETTY MUCH AS IT WAS BUT WITH ALOT OF

#1 of 2# GOOD PEOPLE FIGHTING MY CORNER INCLUDING MY

2

COMRADES IN ROE HOUSE WHO BATTLE DAILY WITH THIS ADMINISTRATION TO DISPEL ANY MYTH OF ANY THREAT TO ME. THE MANAGEMENT TEAM OF THIS BRITISH HELLHOLE DONT HAVE A SAY WHEN IT COMES TO DEALING WITH REPUBLICANS THIS POWER BELONGS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND HER PUPPETS IN THE NIO.

THIS ADMINISTRATION IS TRYING EVERYTHING TO CRIMINALISE AND DEPOLITICISE ME BY MAKING MY LIFE SO UNBEARABLE WITHIN THIS PUNISHMENT UNIT, THE STRIP-SEARCHES, BELL-SEARCHES, MAIL GOING MISSING, CUTTING VISITING TIME SHORT, COLD MEALS SERVED IN BURGER BOXES, LOSS OF GYM, TUCKSHOP ETC FOR REFUSING TO COMPLY WITH STRIP-SEARCHES AND 23HR A DAY LOCK-UPS IS ONLY A FEW OF THE TACTICS USED TO DRIVE ME OUT AND INTO A CRIMINAL HOUSE.

THE RUC/PSNI AND MIS FAILED IN THEIR BID TO BREAK ME AND RECRUIT ME AND IT'S THESE FASCIST MONSTERS WHO ARE KEEPING ME ISOLATED FROM MY COMRADES IN ROE, ISOLATION IS A FORM OF TORTURE BUT THIS IS NOTHING NEW FOR REPUBLICANS SO AS ALWAYS OUR STRUGGLE WILL CONTINUE.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HELP AND KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK MO CHARA AND REMEMBER EVERY LITTLE HELPS.

ON BEHALF OF ALL REPUBLICAN PRISONERS IN MAGHABERRY TORTURE CAMP WE APPRECIATE ANY HELP WE CAN GET AND WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO SF FOR HIGHLIGHTING OUR PLIGHT.

Slán

Gavin Coyle P.O.U.

2 of 2.#

Ebola and its implication in global health management

By Connor Downing

The issues surrounding this virus i.e. infection and its public perceptions all seem to have common themes. Highly aggressive “native” disease, incredible infectious and a cause of concern to international travel, some suggesting even to shut down flights into the affected countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (and now Mali). In fact similarities have been made to “Patient X”, a promiscuous airline steward linked to transmitting hundreds of the earliest cases of the HIV pandemic from Africa. This in fact would be devastating to efforts to control the virus. Closing air traffic would impact millions, potentially creating mass panic.

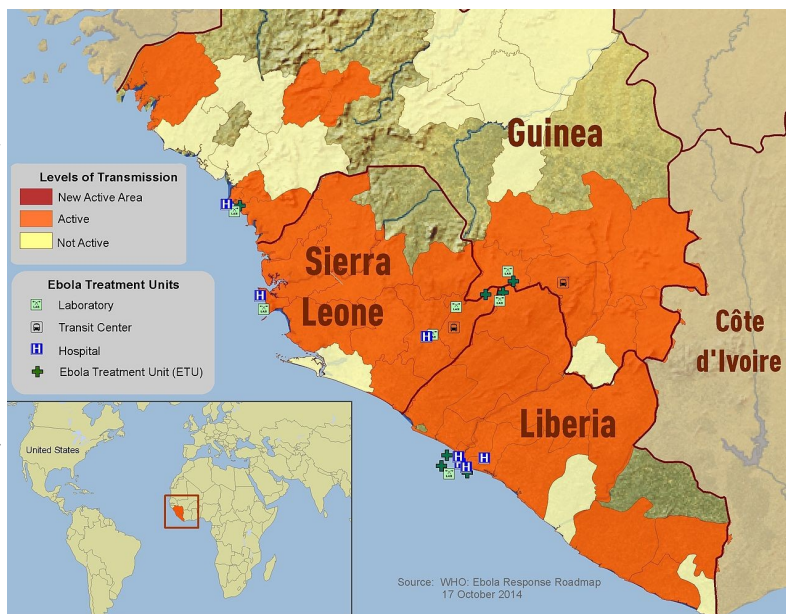
How can one hope to contain a virus amongst chaos? One could not screen people for Ebola if there’s no movement of traffic, and neighbouring countries would be obliged to impose harsh measures to contain the disease itself, further escalating matters. [1] Western media has elicited the worst of people’s self-interest. Even though malaria kills millions annually, fortunately its transmission vector (mosquitoes) is confined to Africa and thusly unimportant to ‘our’ health.

The virus itself is endemic to West Africa and since its discovery in 1976 simultaneously in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo has had 22 epidemics since the present one in Guinea in December 2013. [2] There are four types, but Sudan and Zaire species are responsible for the overwhelming majority, Zaire is currently responsible for the 2014 outbreak. Important to remember here is in its speed of onset, since it harbours no carrier state, ebola is a “fast burning” virus, very much unlike HIV which can lay dormant for years. Infection requires immediate contact with contaminated bodily fluids, thus normally infecting family care-givers and healthcare workers, so widespread airborne ebola at present is a myth. HIV spread due to its long insidious onset, whereas Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) is far more difficult to spread for its frank occurrence, it does not simply leap through crowds infecting *en masse*.

A media frenzy has gripped the western world, news stories of apocalypse and doom have arisen, due in part to their ignorance of the epidemiology of this disease. Since its declaration in March 2014 the WHO have permitted the use of ZMAPP and Ebola Vaccines (due to arrive mid-2015). Zmapp is a cocktail of antibodies that are directed against the virus, but as yet hasn’t been subjected to a randomised controlled trial to determine efficacy or safety.

Moreover for fast-tracking vaccines to be solely based on studies [regional African person exposed vs. regional African person non-exposed] is troublesome, indeed obtaining informed consent would be suspect given linguistic and socio-economic factors. Clinical trials in the western world are rigorous, and even so disasters such as TGNF1412 [3] which seriously injured eight men occur. Would the “Scientific Community” (whatever or whoever that is) be so rigorous in third world Africa? To be fair to the community, the disease itself kills within days, where a situation of “better than nothing” arises. Using this logic any attempts are permitted, yet Ebola has a mortality rate 70-80% so in fact aggressive treatment and experimentation may elevate this rate.

Underpinning this whole outbreak consistently is the poor infrastructure of these countries which is the root cause of its problems (see WHO illustration). Hospitals and clinics are sparse in rural areas and it may be impractical to bring the patient in to them, leading loved ones to care for those affected. Nutritional status is now becoming an acknowledged determining factor in surviving the dis-



The Ebola situation in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone as of 17 October

ease, restrictions on movement in those countries may well pose difficulties in the traffic of food, leading to larger outbreaks of the disease. [4]

In conclusion, the worlds’ governments must not only provide resources and personnel to battling this disease but control their own reactionary instincts least they cause the pandemic they fear. Air traffic should be kept open and screened, disease myths perpetuated by the media should be debunked so that the poorest of the globe are not rashly experimented with for the sake of Western self-interest.

Notes

- [1] Should health care workers who treat Ebola in Africa be quarantined? http://edition.cnn.com/2014/10/24/health/ebola-travel-policy/index.html?hpt=wo_c2
- [2] Outbreaks of Ebola virus disease in Africa: the beginnings of a tragic saga, *Journal of Venomous Animals and Toxins including Tropical Diseases* 2014, 20:44 doi:10.1186/1678-9199-20-44
- [3] TGN1412 (also known as CD28-SuperMAB) is the working name of an immunomodulatory drug which was withdrawn from development after inducing severe inflammatory reactions in 8 men in a first-in-man study. Phase I clinical trials were conducted by Parexel at an independent clinical trials unit in leased space on the premises of Northwick Park and St. Mark’s Hospital, London, on 13 March 2006. (Wiki, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TGN1412>).
- [4] *Is Microsoft Medicine the Solution for Ebola?, The Origins of the Ebola Crisis* October 10-12, 2014, by TARIQ ALI and ALLYSON POLLOCK
llyson Pollock: Well I think you are raising important issues; what is the role of the IMF, the World Bank, the African Development Bank because again if we look at Liberia and Sierra Leone and Guinea, which actually have a lot of natural resources, what is happening to these countries, in terms of their economics is that increasingly the lands are being privatised and being occupied by foreign investors who are coming in and they are simply stripping out the resource and the assets. Liberia has a GDP, gross domestic product, of a couple of billion dollars, and a population of five or six million, so how are they meant to rebuild when actually you’ve got foreign directors coming in and public private partnerships and great flows of money going out and you don’t have any mechanism for redistribution because redistribution means you are trying to build a fairer society and you are trying to put the resources back in.
Counterpunch, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/10/10/the-origins-of-the-ebola-crisis/#.VEkPxl6C141.twitter>



Grass Roots Left

Second National conference
Conference room, Comfort Inn,
 Station Street, B5 4DY.
 Opposite New St Station
 Birmingham City centre

Saturday 6th Dec.
2014,

From 12 noon to 4 pm

This establishment is also a short walk from Snow Hill & Moor St stations. This meeting is open to members of UNITE the union, their families & friends. Fellow trade unionists who are supporters of the Grass Roots left initiative are also most welcome to attend.

Refreshments are available from the hotel's bar on the ground floor.

The complaint by Jerry Hicks to the Certification Office was not successful but it did prove that Unite had not reasonably kept its register of membership accurate and up to date. Jerry said:

"Even more importantly for me, was that we proved that Unite failed to deal with my complaint properly regarding a vile re-tweet by senior appointed official Steve Turner. Steve Turner is often talked about as a future General Secretary and played a big part in McCluskey's campaign. Who, I learn, instead of being held to account has been promoted. As soon as I saw the most offensive of Steve Turner's twitter activity aimed at me, I complained to the General Secretary Len McCluskey and to Mr Andrew Murray 'chief of staff', himself a senior appointed official. I asked, as was proper procedure, for the complaint against Steve Turner and any other who had 'indulged' themselves to be taken to the Executive Council for it's consideration.

Mr Murray sat on the complaint for 18 months. In my view, he chose to protect the institution that appointed him rather than serve the interests of the members who pay his wages.

Laughably, three weeks before the CO hearing was due to commence he did begin his own investigation, though he has refused to allow me to be involved, and will not assure me that I will even be informed of any outcome or reason.

Happily matters have now been taken out of Mr Murray's hands. Mr Murray has been humiliated by the CO's Enforcement Order that my complaint, just as I had asked for 18 months earlier, must be heard by Unite's elected Executive Council, and that has to happen before December 19th 2014.

I have stood for General Secretary three times, each time remarkably, given the disparity of the contests, coming runner up and each time increasing my share of the vote. In this last election I was the 1,000 to 1 outsider in a two horse race. Me, simply an unemployed member with no resources, stood against Len McCluskey, the incumbent General Secretary who held all the resources."

Grass Roots Left Extended National Committee Meeting

At its extended NC on 5 October the GRL reaffirmed its confidence in Jerry Hicks and decided to hold its AGM in Birmingham, now fixed for 6 December. The meeting heard several very important workplace reports, particularly those from Chris Habib (Whipps Cross Hospital) and Stephen Sands (Merseyside) on defence of the NHS. It was agreed that Chris, Stephen, Mike Blackwell and Ollie would collaborate in the production of a GRL A5 leaflet for 13 October NHS strike and a pamphlet outlining the attack on the NHS and how to defend it.

There were conflicting views on Jerry Hicks taking the conduct of the Unite General Secretary ballot to the Certification Officer. Jerry defended

Grass Roots Left reasserts its position on the witchhunt against Unite by the Sunday Times in November of last year:

Grass Roots Left Statement November 2013

"Grass Roots Left totally condemns the current witch-hunt against Unite the Union and its trade union organisation at Grangemouth, as conducted by the Sunday Times.

The target of this witch-hunt is trade union organisation itself, and we stand completely in defence of Stevie Deans and the Unite organisation in Grangemouth and nationally against this attack."

In particular, we repudiate the attempt of the Sunday Times to link Jerry Hicks' stated concerns about the conduct of this year's election for the post of Unite the Union general secretary ballot with the Falkirk Labour Party MP candidate selec-

tion process. Grass Roots Left has no information or any other reason to believe that there was any abuse of the selection process for parliamentary candidates in the Falkirk Labour Party, and we defend and support the principle of trade union involvement in working class political representation."

We do not consider the use of the Certification Officer unprincipled in conditions where no other avenue is open to the left to redress legitimate grievances over the conduct of the election, as was shown in Mick Dooley's challenge to UCATT's ballot. In particular a challenge was needed to the personal libels against Jerry Hicks by Steve Turner and the widespread use of officers of the union to campaign for Len McCluskey during the election campaign, contrary to the union's rules and to natural justice. It is true that the 3% who voted of the 168,000 former members who received ballots could have no effect on the outcome of the ballot but nonetheless the highlighting of the irregularities of this ballot is defensible.

We will not misuse a principled united front tactic against the Murdoch press witchhunt of Unite with any uncritical defence of McCluskey and the Unite bureaucracy, who are in many ways the authors of their own misfortunes by refusing to fight at Grangemouth and now totally capitulating to Miliband over his election manifesto, as we predicted they would. We are with McCluskey and the whole of Unite when they fight the bosses or are under assault by a right wing offensive in this way but that does not mean we moderate our criticism of their betrayals and sell-outs to defend their profits and privileges of the capitalist system itself.

Contributions in support of Jerry's motion from Mike, Andrew and Marcus. Contributions for Gerry's motion from Laurence, Stephen and Keith.

Gerry's motion passed by 4 votes to 2 (NC members, 9 votes to 4 on indicative votes).

Motion in Defence of Grass Roots Left and its record (Gerry moved)

The following motion was passed nem con:

Motion on attack on Syria and Iraq by US imperialism

We oppose the US-led imperialist bombing of Iraq and Syria which will only destabilize the Middle East further and bring about the risk of third world war. We congratulate the 43 MPs who voted against the bombing, and support intervention in anti-war campaigns to raise the profile of class politics.

The meeting also endorsed the online decisions on the motion to the LRC AGM on housing and GD was elected as the delegate.

The meeting also endorsed the motion moved by Jeremy, part of which is here:

Motion on cross-union national meeting of rank and file activists from Marcus Seal

Unite Grass Roots Left agrees to support and build for the cross-union national meeting of rank and file activists planned for 12 noon to 5pm on 8 November 2014 at the Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy

Grass Roots Left asserts its confidence in the future of the Rank and File movement in ALL TUs

St, London W1T 6AQ, with a view to helping to establish a network to share information and provide cross-union solidarity, to campaign around current trade union issues like the anti-union laws, and to prepare the ground for a broader cross-union activist conference in Spring 2015.

A few days after the meeting Workers Power resigned from the GRL, halting work some of their delegates were doing producing flyers and pamphlets as decided at the meeting. This is part of their letter:

Dear Comrades,

We are writing to inform you of our decision to withdraw from Grass Roots Left. You will already be aware of the reasons why. As we argued at the Grass Roots Left National Committee on 5 October 2014, we are opposed to the continuation of Jerry Hicks's current case with the trade unions Certification Officer regarding the conduct of last year's election for the post of Unite General Secretary, and we note with disappointment the National Committee's failure to distance itself from it.

...It is therefore our view that Grass Roots Left is unable to play the role of acting as the focal point for the building of an anti-bureaucratic left within Unite. We look forward to future cooperation with all the people who we have had the opportunity to work with in Grass Roots Left so far, in particular with regard to the initiative for a cross-union rank and file conference that the Grass Roots Left National Committee also voted to endorse at its 5 October meeting.

Regards, Marcus Halaby, for Workers Power

GRL Appeal to Workers Power

We are very sorry that Workers Power has resigned from the GRL. We think it is sectarian and wrong because the use of the Certification Officer by Jerry Hicks is NOT a principled issue but one of tactics.

You may well believe that these tactics are wrong and that he did a foolish thing and gave the McCluskey wing of the union a stick to beat us with but even so surely any rational assessment of the communist United Front tactic should direct you to continue to remain in the GRL and continue to fight for your position there?

As it now stands it looks as if you are appeasing the Unite bureaucracy and assisting them in removing a big obstacle from their path. We all know TU bureaucrats want to intimidate the entire membership so they can act as Miliband's poodles in the run-up to the May 2015 general election.

We appeal to you to reconsider your decision and have the courage to fight through the attacks of the Unite bureaucracy on the GRL and build and develop it as the only possible left opposition to the cynical and corrupt TU bureaucracy in Unite. It also has a clear principled rank-and-file constitution, which you helped to formulate, surely the solid basis for the cross union R+F body we all want.

The following is part of the original motion submitted to the NC on 5 October by Chair Gerry Downing but remitted in an attempt to reach an accommodation with Workers Power, who also remitted the greater part of their original motion: We agree with Jerry Hick's assessment of this collapse by McCluskey:

McCluskey promises Unites full support for Labour and Ed Miliband, including funding - and my word there will be a lot of that. While Ed Balls, Labour's 'would be' next Chancellor of the Exchequer, promises what?

Workers rights? Repeal of anti union laws? No, he promises tax breaks for businesses. What an about turn considering McCluskey recently caught the headlines when he said "Unite may break with Labour, threatening to launch a 'new party' adding that Ed Miliband is drinking in the last chance saloon...

So when McCluskey wrote in his 2010 election address that there would be 'No blank cheque for Labour'. Did he mean it? Not a bit! Unite doubled its donations to Labour in the first quarter of this year. I predict up to £10 million of members' money will be stuffed into the coffers of Labour between now and the General Election in May 2015...

I say Unite should keep our money in clenched fist and demand that Labour repeal the anti union laws, reverse the privatisations of the past, end austerity by making the bankers pay for their mistakes. Labour makes no such promise, nor Unite make any such demand. Instead it offers cash galore, up front and unconditional. I loathe the coalition, I detest the Tories, I despise the Lib Dems, but I have little faith in Labour and Len McCluskey reminds me of a hamster on a wheel, forever running but getting nowhere.

We defend the gains of the Grass Roots Left up to now as the only left opposition within Unite to the cynical manoeuvres of the Unite bureaucracy under McCluskey and we will not yield the ground we have won with almost 80,000 votes (36%) on a strong Rank and File platform which included the principles of election of all trade union officials and taking only as salary equivalent to the average wage.

We reassert the vital necessity for a Rank and File movement to hold the TU leaders like McCluskey, Paul Kenny of the GMB and Dave Prentis of Unison to account and replace them with more militant and revolutionary leaders. But freed from democratic control these high flying bureaucrats play fast and loose with members' money and play the opposition game as softly as possible. They know Miliband is committed to carrying out the Tory-LibDem coalition's austerity package with minor adjustments. At the Labour Party National Policy Forum in mid July austerity



McCluskey promises Unites full support for Labour and Ed Miliband, including funding - and my word there will be a lot of that.

was affirmed as *The Guardian* reported on 20 July:

On Sunday, one delegate forced a vote on a demand for an emergency budget in 2015 to allow a Labour government to rip up the coalition's spending plans for 2015-16. Members, however, voted by 125 to 14 in favour of the leadership's proposal to accept the coalition's plans for day-to-day spending – but not necessarily capital spending – in the first year of the next parliament. "The Labour party knows that this Conservative-led government's failure to balance the books in this parliament means we will have to make difficult decisions after the next election," Balls said. "Party members have endorsed the tough fiscal position Ed Miliband and I have set out. We will balance the books, deliver a surplus on the current budget and get the national debt falling as soon as possible in the next parliament. But we will get the deficit down more fairly."

Reports are that the "big three", McCluskey, Kenny and Prentis, had agreed this entire package in advance (the smaller unions were not consulted, apparently) and the three day meeting itself in Milton Keynes was largely a rubber stamp job. Only 14 delegates emerged with any honour at all. Even more disgracefully it turned out that one of the things the three musketeers had agreed on was that the fees the Employments Tribunals now charge workers who claim unfair dismissal, up to £1,200, would remain. This did cause a mini-revolt only to be quelled by a vague promise that no worker "would be out of pocket". So the Coalition imposition of fees at these tribunals, which have become ever more biased against workers over the years, will now be unchallenged by cynical TU leaders so as not to embarrass Miliband, lest anyone think he had an ounce of sympathy for victimised workers, militant or otherwise. How could they betray the most victimised and vulnerable of their members in this appalling manner?

Unite's delegation approved the Collins Report at Labour's Special Conference thus weakening the links with the trade unions with only a single vote against. The upshot is that Labour will still get all the money it needs from McCluskey but the means to ensure value for our money is now

weakened considerable, moving the party closer to the relationship the unions have with the US Democrats – one of paymasters with little or no influence. Union democracy, the key demand of the Grass Roots Left, is again marginalised. GRL is the only body fighting for that within Unite.

McCluskey spoke of the “frightening” consequence of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership at the TUC but made no significant demands of Labour to reject this deal. He says he is worried Labour will endorse an “austerity-lite” programme, reports the Guardian but “While we understand they [Labour] have to be careful, the basis of our argument is that austerity is not working ... The best stimulus you can give is

giving low-paid workers a pay rise. They would not put any of it in the Cayman Islands.” But while challenging shadow chancellor Ed Balls, McCluskey does not question his suitability as chancellor-in-waiting. He wants Labour to win and does not intend to rock the boat more than he needs to keep his members happy. “It is not up to me to choose Ed’s team,” he says. That is he will do nothing about that either.

And now he boasts of how he has betrayed his own members in defence of capitalism and British jobs for British workers but the mass media still do not like him and this makes him “genuinely angered” says the Guardian

He says he is immensely proud of what Unite

has achieved in constructive talks with companies such as Jaguar Land Rover, General Motors and Rolls-Royce, which have helped to keep factories open and secure jobs. He wants to do more to portray unions as positive forces, and to show that on many occasions they work well with company bosses, for everyone’s benefit. “95% of our time we are engaged positively,” he says. “We are a legitimate part of our society, we are by far and away the largest voluntary organisation, we speak on behalf of a huge section of the population and their families.

These are the reasons we must fight for a genuine Rank and File movement, the Grass Roots Left, in Unite and across all the unions

GRL Rank and File or UtR/NSSN Hybrids

By Gerry Downing, Grass Roots Left Chair (personal capacity)

The SWP had its *Right to Work* front organisation up until 2011/2 when *Unite the Resistance* was launched. GRL has long been critical of both these party front (like the NSSN). Dave Renton also reflected this criticism and wrote *Reflections on an Industrial Perspective* in November 2013:

By 2011-2, the party had decided to put this manoeuvre (alliances with the TU bureaucracy) on a semi-permanent basis by closing down its existing “United Front” Right to Work in favour of a new campaign Unite the Resistance (UtR), which we were eventually told – about a year after it had been launched – would (in theory) bring together the rank and file of the trade unions with the leadership, the idea being that the militant demands of the former would spur the latter into action. UtR we were told was not a rank and file organisation, as there was no basis for one, but an alliance with the bureaucracy, out of which it was hoped more strikes would come.

...No-one was asked to criticise Billy Hayes, even though his union CWU has been relatively passive in response to the enormous threat of privatisation; we simply don’t dare criticise the bureaucrats for fear that none of them will come back for the following conference in another year’s time.

The International Socialism article of spring 2014, The rank and file and the trade union bureaucracy, by Professor Ralph Darlington attempts to answer these and similar criticisms:

The UtR initiative has been subject to critique for its alleged excessive orientation on the left union bureaucracy at the expense of the workplace and rank and file organisation, and on the basis that the SWP’s attempt to win influence inside the left bureaucracy, including having party members occupying official positions within the union apparatus (such as at NEC level), is no substitute for developing a rank and file cadre whose primary focus is on building independent action. It is claimed the SWP has adopted a “top-down, bureaucratic strategy”, where a “small number of people substitute their own activity for that of the working class”, thereby “replicating the methods of the bureaucracy”.

Comrade Darlington went on to expound on this at length but this is the most relevant passage:

Arguably the significance of the Unite the Resis-

tance (UtR) initiative is that it represents an attempt to build the beginnings of a hybrid organisation, a united front which brings rank and file militants together with left officials who are prepared to mobilise to fight against austerity and create networks of solidarity for those who do fight back. It is an attempt to bridge the gap between the widespread anger of workers and their ability to successfully push the union officials or act independently. It is an initiative designed to try to involve sections of the left union bureaucracy as a means of increasing the potential scale of workers’ resistance and thereby allowing the rank and file to maximise its own leverage.

This animal is therefore a political mule; it has neither the clarity of being a fully bureaucratic body such as staff the leadership of all trade unions under capitalism nor is it a R+F movement which mobilises independently of the trade union bureaucrats; with them if possible, against them if necessary.

Before we can clarify the vanguard of the working class as to what is necessary we must first clarify ourselves. Like all mules this beast has “neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity”. In seeking justification for this “hybrid” comrade Darlington examines the trade unions and, in a clever sleight of hand, manages to equate the trade union bureaucracy with the trade unions themselves. Both, according to him, have a dual or ambivalent nature:

The ambivalent nature of the trade union bureaucracy arises because they are obliged to balance between the employers and state on the one hand, and the workers on the other. If full-time officials collaborated too closely with the employers or the state their power would be totally undermined because the only reason they are taken seriously is that they represent social forces that pose the potential for resistance, and if they failed to articulate their members’ grievances and on occasion lead strike action that delivered at least some improvements in pay and conditions there would be the danger they would lose rank and file support in the union.

Whilst it is perfectly correct to speak of the “highly contradictory nature of trade unionism”,



The real rank and file: left to right: Professor Ralph Darlington, Dr Michael Murphy, President of Ireland Michael D Higgins, Mrs Sabina Higgins, Professor Karen Hunt, and Mr Padraig Yeates.

and correct from there to treat trade unions as bodies that act in contradictory ways it certainly is not correct to transfer this to the leading bureaucracy “the few dozen individuals who are the principal national officials, some of whom serve on the TUC General Council”. These and their supporters like the United Left in Unite and the Broad Lefts are fronts for the bureaucracy and are not in the least “contradictory”.

If on occasion, like the Winter of Discontent, for instance, or in any number of other struggles, the TU bureaucracy calls a strike or strikes, it is because they fear that the membership will oust them in disgust and pick new and more militant leaders or they fear that the leaders of the capitalist state in parliament will destroy their trade union organisations and so deprive them of their privileged lifestyles. They remain the backbone of British imperialism, the chief defenders of the capitalism against the working class, not in the least “contradictory”.

And that is the question for all serious oppositions in the SWP, its offshoots and everywhere else. As the TU bureaucracy moves closer to the capitalist state in its crisis a rank and file movement is urgently needed in the workplaces, not the useless mule that is the UtR of the even worse National Shop Stewards Network. Now is the time to rededicate ourselves to rebuilding the Grass Roots Left in Unite and all the Unions.

TUC National Shop Stewards Network rally

TUC Liverpool 7/9/2014 By Alan Hunter

This year's NSSN Rally took place in the Jury's Inn next to the BT Convention Centre where the TUC was holding its annual Congress. The NSSN, the industrial arm of the Socialist Party, had 400 workers in attendance. The Rally commenced with an Introduction by Linda Taaffe, Secretary of the NSSN. She claimed that the dreaded Bedroom Tax had been defeated. She also suggested that the General Strike was still on the agenda. Taaffe was wrong on both counts. The Bedroom Tax is still in operation; all that happened was that a reading of the Tax was amended. There is no General Strike motion on the agenda of the TUC Congress.

The NSSN leadership which is an arm of the left bureaucracy in the TUC, failed to recognise that the TUC General Council has refused every time to carry out general strike motions at TUC Congresses. At this Congress the NSSN leadership refused to recognise this fact. She referred to the best of the union leaders at the top without analysing the nature of the trade union bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is the arm of the capitalist state, it is totally reactionary and spineless and the last thing it wants is the conquest of state power and the overthrow of the capitalist state.

Darren Ireland, a regional organiser with the RMT, the rail Union, was the next speaker. He claimed that the RMT was a fighting union and explained about the exploitation in the shipping industry. He said this was an indictment of the trade union bureaucracy. He revealed that ISS, a cleaning company, had locked out the cleaners who were all members of the RMT.

Roy Bentham, a member of UCATT and from the BLACKLIST SUPPORT GROUP, explained about the files of blacklisted workers, there were police dossiers on building workers like the late Mike Abbot, a stalwart of the Shrewsbury Building Workers Campaign who campaigned to have all charges dropped against Shrewsbury building workers like Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson who were jailed in the 1972 building workers strike. Bentham said that the police had dossiers on many blacklisted workers. He said that there needed to be an independent inquiry and legal redress. Many Labour councils and the Welsh Assembly members supported the campaign. Bentham commented that they are trying to buy our silence; most of the families who have been blacklisted by the Consulting Association or Economic League are seeking justice.

Ian Lawrence the general secretary of NAPO, the probationer's organisation was the next speaker and spoke about the collective action for the £10 pay rise which the TUC is organising. On October 18th there will be a big demonstration in London around this issue. He referred to food banks, zero hour contracts and called for collectivism. He claimed that NAPO was an unaffiliated union in regard to the political levy. He said that there had been a failure to deal with the anti-trade union laws which had been allowed to stand under successive Tory and Labour governments. He then hypocritically claimed that NAPO were not in dispute over pay but nevertheless he felt he had the right to criticise other trade union leaders over inaction over pay.

Ronnie Draper general secretary of the BFAWU, the bakers' union spoke next. Draper stands out like a sore thumb as one of the few principled trade union leaders. He stated that that there needed to be a general strike organised by the TUC, coordinated action. He said that the TUC had failed us and unlike most union leaderships when presented with zero hour contracts Draper and his executive organised a mass picket to block Hovis where his members worked and successfully forced management to abandon zero hour contracts which they did. The campaign of his members at Hovis who were joined by hundreds of workers and their families through a mass picket has smashed the introduction of zero hour contracts. This is the way to fight. Draper said that there must be the total abolition of zero hour contracts. He said that Miliband and the Labour leadership must not fudge the issue. Recent



The Lobby of the TUC by the WRP (News Line) and by the NSSN in September

TUC statements are diabolical, what has happened to the values of the TUC on equality? The Labour party must abolish zero hour contracts and they must campaign for a £10 minimum wage and take the lead of the low pay campaign in Seattle in the USA where these brave fighters took on the employers and won. We have to give these trade union leaders a kick up the ass and in the Bakers Union we have shown the way of how to fight. low pay is definitely not an option stated Draper in conclusion.

Helen Patterson from youth fight for jobs explained how the youth fight for jobs has worked with young workers in the Bakers Union and is now fighting to unionise workers in fast food places like MacDonald's. There must be a general strike and young workers have showed the way to scrap low pay and eliminate poverty.

The lesson from this rally is that the NSSN leadership and the SPEW leadership are moving rapidly to the right in this period. The social contradictions and explosions that are emerging in capitalism which is leading to poverty homelessness and war mean that centrists like the SPEW have nowhere to go. They are moving closer and closer to the bureaucratic apparatus in the trade unions. Their claim to be a Rank and File organisation is false. More and more they latch onto the consciousness of what they perceive is the working class. These centrists and fakes have no confidence in the revolutionary aspirations of the working class to rid itself of capitalism and to strive to establish socialism.

Leon Trotsky in 1938 said "The crisis of humanity can be reduced to the crisis of proletarian leadership" [1]. That is still the case in 2014. The NSSN campaign of a one day 24 hour general strike has now being changed to a campaign for £10 a week. They have latched onto this reformist demand of the bureaucrats whose whole function is to act as loyal servants of capitalism. The SPEW has set out to embrace reformism. Their allegiance, if they had any, to Trotskyism is ended.

They have embraced the left bureaucracy and under this crisis will end up as reformist agents of capitalism. It is the task of Socialist Fight comrades to deepen our relationships with NSSN comrades and win the best elements to Trotskyism. That means an unrelenting fight in Grass Roots Left to establish a determined centralised leadership and resolve the crisis of Revolutionary Leadership.

Notes

Trotsky, L. *The Transitional Programme and the Tasks of the Fourth International, Founding Documents of the Fourth International, 1938*

National Shop Stewards Conference 2014: An assessment

By Alan Hunter

The eighth NSSN Conference took place on the 5th July 2014. The strength of the NSSN, the industrial arm of the Socialist Party of England and Wales is that it is able to attract more than 400 workers who are mostly involved in disputes with their Employers over pay and conditions. Strikes are taking place over a number of issues in the public and private sector. Marx was correct to say “That the proletariat is a revolutionary class” [1]. Although this conference attracted a number of workers its major weakness is the centrist and reformist leadership of the NSSN.

Rob Williams, Chair of the NSSN, outlined the plans for a public sector strikes on the 10 July, he said that this would be the biggest strength of workers and will be followed by further days of action by UNISON and their Unions.

He said this would be a lever and workers at union branch meetings will strike together to win, it will be like November 30th. He told the conference that there would be reports from Yorkshire ambulance workers, out on strike, threatened tube strikes and opposition to zero hour contracts and a campaign for £10 per hour.

Janice Goodrich President of PCS was the first of many trade union bureaucrats that spoke from the platform. She talked about Universal Credit, continued wage freezes under this coalition government, we must break the pay freeze and build for a strike, fight for a better world, solidarity, socialism and permanent change. This was a typical syndicalist speech, imbued with reformism and no perspective on how to get rid of Cameron and the Coalition.

Next to speak was Ronnie Draper general secretary of the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union. Draper is a principled left wing trade union leader and he was instrumental with his workers at Hovis for smashing Zero Hour contracts. Unlike most of the bureaucrats he organised a consultative ballot for strike action over the general strike motion that was passed at the TUC Congress last year and his members voted by 70% to support the general strike proposal, but there has been no action by the TUC General Council who have completely shelved the proposal.

The NSSN leadership guided by the SPEW still invests its hope in these trade union bureaucrats, but refuses to recognise the nature of the trade union bureaucracy. The SPEW who claims to have a Trotskyist heritage should listen to Trotsky on the nature of the bureaucracy.

Writing on the lessons of the 1926 General strike Trotsky was quite clear on what the bureaucracy was, “The General Council is the agency of the British bourgeoisie”. [2]. Lenin took a much harder position in relation to the role of the bureaucracy. In *Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder* Lenin stated that the victory of the proletariat was impossible unless the bureaucracy was moved “The victory of the revolutionary proletariat is impossible, unless *this evil* (bureaucracy LH emphasis) is combated, unless the opportunist, social traitor leaders are exposed, discredited and expelled”. [3].

When the NSSN was formed in 2006, the organisation had at the time independent and other centrists in the leadership but the SPEW comrades in the NSSN were determined to make the NSSN an adjunct of the trade union bureaucracy. Clause 3 of their constitution makes it clear that the NSSN is a network and cannot interfere with any decisions that individual trade unions make even if its blatantly against the interests of their members.

In 2006 there was a split in the organisation over this issue of whether the NSSN should be an adjunct of the bureaucracy or to be a genuine rank and file body independent of the bureaucracy. The SPEW comrades split the organisation and today are an organisation



BFAWU General Secretary Ronnie Draper, Rob Williams and Katrine Williams at the NSSN AGM on 5 July 2014

influenced and directed by the Socialist Party. [4].

The trade union bureaucracy is a caste of the capitalist state that during the time of Empire made its piece with capitalism. It always defends the status quo and particular identifies with capitalism and its ethos. Lenin makes reference to this in his pamphlet on imperialism. [5]. Comrade Downing commenting on their relationship with the Prison Officers association:

They still continue to have a close relationship with the prison officers association and view the state forces as ‘workers in uniform’. Many prison officers oppress and brutalise republican and other anti-imperialist prisoners incarcerated in Imperialist prisons in Britain and in Ireland. Comrade Gerry Downing in his pamphlet on the IMT (International organisation of Ted Grant and his followers) and the CWI (Committee for workers international of which the SPEW is the British section) points out the weakness of the SPEW who regards prison officers, policeman as ‘workers in uniform’. This was not the position of Trotsky or Lenin. “Marxists reject the characterisation of the police, army or prison officers as workers in uniform”. [6].

Trotsky and Lenin are quite clear on the role of policeman, state spies and prison officers, “The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state is a bourgeois cop not a worker”. [7]

In their conference statement the NSSN appeals for more strike actions and have nothing to say on the role of the bureaucracy and are now moving closer to the bureaucratic apparatus something that Lenin and Trotsky were opposed to. Their Marxist heritage is nothing but a sham. With the election of a general secretary onto the NSSN steering committee the SPEW has now reached the top table and has become an integral part of the bureaucracy.

They will continue to mouth slogans against capital and particularly Cameron, their left talk is camouflaged by their relationship with agents of capital, the trade union leadership. Some disputes or strikes will be won, but this is temporary, unless workers heed the advice of Lenin, which is an unremitting struggle against these fifth columnists in the workers movement many workers will be and are suspicious of this left talk.

They need a serious organisation that will fight for an independent rank and file organisation separate from the bureaucracy. Grass Roots Left must be the organisation to break workers from this reformist and centrist leadership of the NSSN. Socialist Fight and the LCFI fights for a perspective for the proletarian seizure of power.

The NSSN and the socialist party are inveterate reformists “But these essential reformist politics are the same they are still for the parliamentary road to socialism only now they are sure the Labour party cannot do it but a more radical reformist party can perform this task. This radical party is the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC)”. [8].

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Plender's Insight: A Marxist Deconstruction

By Gerry Downing. 20 August 2014.

The Financial Times's pundit John Plender projects a new space for Market Forces via a new Il Duce.

The Financial Times has a back page column by John Plender on 20 August 2014 of exceptional importance. This pundit begins by explaining that both US and EU bond yields have declined, so reducing government repayment debts. So far so good but it is because we are entering a deflationary epoch, too much like Japan of the last two decades to be welcomed. And he goes on to explain that Europe's problems are "intractable".

The core problem, he assures us, is "deficient demand", an entity also known to Marxists as "under consumption". Germany has been tightening fiscal policy, and as southern Europe cannot devalue their currency they must resort to "internal devaluation"; wage cutting and sackings so, "the future of a generation is now blighted by scarcely believable levels of youth unemployment".

Of course serious Marxists, beginning with Marx himself, have long debunked this theory, which is a circular argument. If the problem is under consumption the answer is simple; print more money and expand more debt. Another version of the same thing is to plead for raising the minimum wage significantly, increasing welfare payments or encouraging wage rises for the lowest paid, increasing tax allowances for them, etc. Aside from the obvious fact for Marxists that this contravenes the iron laws of the class struggle, the bourgeois only concede to the working class what its organised strength can force out of them by strikes or the threat of strikes, even anti Marxists have lost faith in that non-solution.

Someone must pay the debt in the end, all but the blindest of reformist Keynesians like the Left Economics Advisory Panel (LEAP) McDonnellites have now realised. And Plender knows that too, as we shall see; he doesn't believe his deficient demand thesis at all. Or more correctly he does not believe it can work without a Milton Friedman style alteration in the balance of class forces such as we saw in Chile in 1973.

Increasingly serious articles and debates within academic Marxist circles (see "And yet it moves (down) by Estaban Ezequiel Maito, Weekly Worker August 14 2014 for the debate there) and in practicing Marxist groups such as the Trotskyist Socialist Party/ Committee for a Workers International and others are asserting that the falling rate of profit is the root cause of the crisis. Plender and some self declared Marxists and Trotskyists would examine that in a serious way were they not so ideologically committed to the capitalist system. His solution comes at the end of his piece; for those who can read between the lines the hints leading up to this are very broad.

There is a "huge debt overhang" in the euro zone, he observes and, as they have to "run primary budget surpluses" (before interest payments) they can find no way out by fiscal manipulation. The European Central Bank has not resorted to quantitative easing (QE)



The Financial Times's pundit John Plender; Europe's problems are "intractable".

as it probably would not work.

There is some relief to be had from exports to the reviving US economy but this is weak and additionally the US has already used QE to devalue the dollar against the euro, thus making imported goods less competitive. So far so bad. Then comes yet more exasperated pessimism: "Now geopolitics is set to exacerbate the debt problem because there are growing calls in the US for its allies to stop free – riding on the American military budget".

The explanation here is that the USA spends 4.5% of its GDP on its military budget but only three more of the 28 NATO allies spend at or over the promised 2% mark; Estonia, Greece, and the UK. The US should reduce its spending to say, 2.5% of GDP, and its allies should take up the slack.

Why everyone could not reduce military spending and produce for need is another question not posed; there are wars to fight, is the answer and Russia and China might catch up. Besides the global hegemon has to maintain a big military advantage over its reluctant friends (Germany and parts of the wider EU) and its more obvious enemies or potential enemies (the BRICS) lest they combine against it; the British Navy had to be twice the size of its biggest competitor in the heyday of the hegemony of the British Empire around it peak in the 1860s and 70s.

It is premature to call this projected reduction isolationism, Plender thinks, but it is beginning to unite "conservatives and progressives". Ron Paul, the far right Republican reactionary, meets Bernie Sanders, the Social Democratic Democrat, here it seems. Why Ron Paul thinks these thoughts is indeed enigmatic for some until these factors are considered. But then there is renewed presence of US troops in Iraq, Plender says (does he know more than the rest of us?) .

And, we might add, there is the factor of the Military Industrial Complex (MIC) and all those local jobs in manufacturing those weapons of mass destruction (a branch of 'industry' that must remain in the USA by law) whose viability is decided as the pork belly

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Socialist Fight and Grass Roots Left will continue to fight inside the NSSN for a proper revolutionary perspective for the removal of this cowardly trade union bureaucracy. Only when that is achieved can we properly fight for the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement with workers power.

Notes

[1] Marx .K and Engels. F *The communist Manifesto*. Progress Publishers. Moscow

[2] Trotsky. I *Writings on Britain. Volume 2*. New park Publications .London

[3] VI Lenin *Left wing Communism, an infantile disorder*.

[4] Downing. G. Resignation letter from the NSSN 2006.

[5] VI Lenin *Imperialism the Highest stage of Capitalism*. Progress Publishers. Moscow.

[6] Downing G. *The CWT and the IMT Right Centrists Granitites*.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

Plender's Insight

is divided when the Senators and Representatives face the MIC and all the other powerful transnational corporation and other special interest lobbies like the Zionists.

Moreover combined with the QE used by the USA to devalue the dollar its position as the trading currency of the world enables it to force all its rivals effectively to pay for its trade deficit, thus ensuring a deep resentment at their maltreatment by the USA which would immediately become apparent if the opportunity arose when an economic catastrophe befell the US economy.

What's to be done? There aren't any easy options, speculates pundit Plender. Debt forgiveness in the euro zone? The German banks won't have it as they might fold. Ah, there's always that great standby, "structural reforms" (mass sackings, wage cuts, welfare reduction/abolition). European Central Bank measure in 2008 were intended to buy time for this but all governments have been slacking; imposed austerity is just not of the order required to restore profitability. Time is short, growth is only projected at 1.5% in the euro zone and 1.9% in the US in 2014-30 (barring another economic catastrophe, he might caution), the OECD thinks sufficient "structural reform" is being implemented or is on the way but few of us serious pundits are fooled by that.

Where to begin? ITALY, that's where. Under its new prime minister Matteo Renzi things are looking up, "it has the best opportunity in years to break with the past". How so? "The diminished power of the trade unions and the voter experience of protracted zero growth gives him a real chance". "The guard of the Italian proletariat is down, let's go for its throat!" is the nasty thought behind this diplomatic language.

And he must be aware of the risks. Imposing this the type of "structural reforms" he clearly feels necessary on an already brutally "structurally reformed" working class would risk revolution. But "we seem to be succeeding in this in the Ukraine", must be the motivating thought here.

Sophisticated ruling class strategists will get the message but it's best not to spell it out too clearly for any hostile class enemies that might peruse the piece; deniability must be preserved. But the final hint is indeed broad, we are heading for Japanese style deflation and with the ultimate consoling thought of all the exasperated petty bourgeois of the planet who are trying to galvanise the forces of



Mussolini and Fascist Blackshirts during the March on Rome; Matteo Renzi appointed as Italy's youngest ever prime minister in February 2014 – the new Il Duce?



reaction for the first significant 1933-style strike on the working class of a major metropolitan country; "The markets have realism on their side". That might be rephrased as "history is on our side, we have to make this system work again no matter what it takes".

And, given that this period in the twenty first century sees global inequality between nations at its highest ever and the gap between the rich and the poor within nations now wider than in Victorian Britain (and no more gruel available for the whining Olivers) the imposition of the far greater inequality proposed here by Plender in these brutal "structural reforms" would require severe police state oppression if not fascism itself. But he thinks the bourgeoisie might just get away with that globally beginning in Italy today.

That's ultimately how to deal with the unbelievable levels of youth unemployment in southern Europe for a start. If capital cannot make profit out of unemployed youth and they are a drag on the welfare state a nice global war would solve that problem and destroy enough human and industrial capital to restore profit rates for a section of the biggest capitalists. Hitler's rise to power in 1933 inevitably led to war in 1939, Trotsky observed at the time. After WWII the capitalist class would then be much smaller as a class but the remaining would also be much more profitable and wealthier and the hegemony of the USA and its closest allies, finance capitalist centres like the UK, would be secured for another generation. A big section of the middle and smaller sized capitalists have to be sacrificed together with all those unemployed youth to appease the gods of profit.

Just as Il Duce saved the Italian bourgeois when he began his crusade almost a century ago which ended in triumph with the March on Rome [1] again Italy will show the whole world its future. Italy didn't do so well out of WWII but they did successfully kick off the real struggle in 1922 which ultimately benefitted the USA and finance capital so handsomely, may be Plender's thought here.

Fascism is now the only realistic choice for the world, is the undeniable implication. Inspired by events in the Ukraine, where the liberal Guardian-reading establishment pulled a major section of the centrist (in Marxist parlance) and reformist left after them to support the EuroMaidan and admire the courage of the fascist storm-troopers of finance capital we are certain our time has come again, says the Plenders of today. Tomorrow belongs to us.

"It does not and it will not", every revolutionary socialist and every serious class fighter responds. Tomorrow belongs to the revolution and we will make sure that it triumphs by building the World Party of Socialist Revolution, the reformed Fourth International.

Notes

[1] The March on Rome (Marcia su Roma) was a march by which Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's National Fascist Party (Partito Nazionale Fascista, or PNF) came to power in the Kingdom of Italy (Regno d'Italia). The march took place from 22 to 29 October 1922. (Wiki, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_on_Rome)



HMS Colossus, lead ship of the class, painted in 1891 in Malta; by then the British Empire was declining, being progressively overtaken by Germany and the USA

Socialist Fight statement on the Scottish referendum on 18 September: Vote NO 8-9-14

We must pose and answer certain questions to decide on a “yes” or “no” vote.

1. Is Scotland a nation? We say yes.
2. Is Scotland an oppressed nation? We say no, it is an imperialist nation.
3. Does it have the right to self-determination? We say yes but we are opposed to it exercising that right.
4. Is separation in the interests of the Scottish, British or international working class? We say no.

The militant Scottish working class of the mid 1980s would not have accepted the vote yes position at all and no substantial or even small far left group in Britain, the WRP, the SWP or Militant advocated it at that time.

When the first rumblings of the RBS crisis were heard, Salmond dismissed the rumours as the activities of “a few spivs and speculators”. He was perhaps the last person standing to grasp that Scotland’s banks were imploding and does not admit even now that Scotland would have been bankrupt if they had not been bailed out by Westminster, i.e. English taxpayers in the main. (It later emerged out that. See e.g. London Review of Books:

That the primary cause of this disaster, in the UK’s case, was the total recklessness of the two main Scottish banks, RBS and HBOS, is an inconvenient truth that we could never expect the current SNP leader to confront, especially as he was previously employed as an economist by one of those now zombified institutions. Even more inconveniently for Alex Salmond, the twin pillars of the once proud Scottish banking sector are now being propped up by the British state (i.e. largely English taxpayers). Salmond’s response to this economic earthquake has been to blame a pair of Anglo-Scottish traitors, Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling, for failing to regulate the financial sector properly. This skates over the most inconvenient truth of all for the SNP: up until the crash occurred, Salmond was calling for even lighter financial regulation than that imposed by New Labour. In an interview with the *Times* on 7 April 2007, he stated: ‘We are pledging a light-touch regulation suitable to a Scottish financial sector with its outstanding reputation for probity.’ The reality is that Salmond was the king of the ‘spivs and speculators’ he has been denouncing of late.

The next “vision” was that Scotland would be part of the European dream as it would get automatic membership of the EU. Challenged, Salmond said he had taken robust legal advice on the issue. It turned out that was a bare-faced lie to the Holyrood Parliament which he got away with only because the Labourites didn’t press the advantage. He not only hadn’t taken advice, no-one had even properly researched the issue. The EU issued a flurry of statements to the effect that Scotland would have to apply in the same manner as any other state and that membership wouldn’t be granted in a hurry. The pertinent Member State is the UK, of which Scotland is a region. If Scotland leaves the UK, it obviously ceases to be a part of a Member State. It was at that point that the Spanish government said (for Catalonically obvious reasons) that it would be minded to veto any Scottish application.

The entitlement and privilege which have driven this way of life in Scotland have been built on a system that has survived almost intact since the Scottish Reformation in 1560. The lands which bear these hunting estates belong to the most exclusive cadre of landowners in the developed world. More than half of Scotland is owned by fewer than 500 people. According to the academic and land reformer, Jim Hunter, this equates to “the most concentrated pattern of land own-



ership in the developed world”.

How does the Scottish and English/Welsh working class see the referendum?

But it is not just an economic question but how this economic reality is understood by the mass of the working class that is important for Marxists. This is how Lenin judges the matter in the quote at the beginning of the piece. We must severely differentiate ourselves from the bourgeois nationalist Alex Salmond. Salmond dictates the political content of the “yes” referendum campaign with the likes of former Scottish Socialist Party leader Tommy Sheridan dancing to his tune to the extent that WSWS writers Steve James and Jordan Shilton on 5 July 2014 speculated, somewhat fancifully, that he may be about to join the SNP.

“At a recent meeting in East Kilbride, Sheridan began his speech with a reference to Mel Gibson’s ludicrous and ahistorical Braveheart, declaring that the referendum was about “Freedom.” Tyranny “comes in many forms,” he said, noting that “since 1951 Scotland has had to endure 35 years of Tory government that we never voted for”—something that could be said for many other regions of the UK and about most British workers.

In one speech posted on the Internet, Sheridan complained bitterly that Scotland had been paying more to the UK for the past 32 years than it had been getting back. This showed that people in Scotland were not beggars, “but self-sufficient.”

In a newspaper interview Sheridan was more explicit, declaring: “We’re constantly told how Scotland is stronger and better together as part of the United Kingdom. But if you look at Scotland’s resources, our potential, our talent and what we have achieved as a nation, there is absolutely no argument that can convincingly say Scotland is better off not being an independent country.”... his is an argument routinely employed by Italy’s Liga Nord or Belgium’s Vlamse Belang. These right wing separatist parties complain that they are subsidising poorer regions of the country and should be free to enjoy their own prosperity.” [\[1\]](#)

As Sandy McBurney observed against ex SWP member (now RS21) Neil Davidson in his Weekly Worker interview:

“Alex Salmond might have been against the war on Iraq, but he supported the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and the bombing of Libya. He’s a great friend of American imperialism and the dominant role of the USA in world politics. The SNP have always made a big fuss about supporting Scottish regiments in the British army. They might want to get rid of Trident, but they want to remain in Nato [\[2\]](#) and have proposed a policy of ‘don’t ask and don’t tell’ in respect of the presence of nuclear-armed Nato ships in Scottish waters. The idea that an independent Scotland would be anti-imperialist is just ridiculous.

...The whole process of splitting our forces into two different countries will seriously weaken the solidarity that exists. It is already happening. It is quite common for socialists not to support the founding of a Britain-wide socialist party – instead they advocate a separate party for Scotland with its own separate programme. They reject the prospect and perspective of a government in Britain controlled by the working class.

Davidson also underestimates the real danger that a 'yes' vote could lead to an increase in nationalism on both sides of the border due to disputes on the exact terms of the 'divorce'. If the SNP win the referendum they propose an optimistic timetable of 18 months of negotiation with Westminster leading up to actual independence in March 2016. This process could get very messy, with chauvinists on both sides of the border stirring up nationalist resentment in respect of the division of assets and liabilities. In such a situation politics on both sides of the border could move sharply to the right and independence would weaken the only social force that is capable of defeating imperialism: the working class. In this context we could see what is left of the UK becoming even more aggressively militaristic after independence than Britain currently is.

But capital is organised at the level of the state and by splitting up our forces many on the left are effectively giving up this fight against capitalism as a system. I really cannot see how you can take on internationally organised capital by dividing our forces into ever smaller entities. Why help build a new national prison for the working class? The fact that this increase in nationalism is visible not just in Britain, but also in many other countries, shows that the traditional reformist left is continuing to disintegrate and degenerate. We need an international Marxist alternative to the old politics that still dominate the workers' movement." [3]

Finance Minister John Swinney promises that the new government would borrow to fund welfare payments but from where? Salmond says that they will repudiate Scotland's share of the UK's debt if Scotland cannot use Sterling but that would mean a default which would destroy its financial standing in the world markets. They would have to pay prohibitive rates for any borrowing as the southern European countries and Ireland had to a few years ago. Swinney has no intention of borrowing to fund welfare payments and almost certainly couldn't even if he had. It's only cheap propaganda designed to fool the poor; disgracefully the middle class of press and politics connives in the deceit.

Sterling is the British currency. The government of capitalist Britain is not obliged to put its resources at risk simply to humour capitalist Scotland. The choice seems to be between Sterling (making "independence" a sham as Scotland would inevitably have to bow to Bank of England rules) or the euro. The latter would make Sterling seem like very Heaven itself. The viability of a Scottish currency is too much of an unknown to take seriously. In short, the one question few on the left seem willing to ask is "Is an independent, capitalist Scotland economically viable?". If there is doubt on that score, what might be the consequences for society as a whole, let alone the working class?

Is or is not Scotland a post-industrial country? To ask that question is to answer it. Does it have a viable financial sector? The collapse of its two major banks, the HBOS and the taking of RBS, into British ownership (its management has already said it will move south in the event of a "yes" vote) suggest that there are serious issues there. So there is little industry and only little banks. There are lots of lawyers, though.

Lastly on this there it is very light minded to take a "yes" position because the British capitalist establishment take a "no" position. You must make a concrete analysis in each case. Trotsky opposed the separation of Catalonia from Spain, so did the Spanish bourgeoisie and the dictator Francisco Franco. [5]

The History of the Scottish Vanguard of the British Working Class

The first great working class movement was the Chartist in Britain (1838-48) and the Scottish working class was in its forefront. True many of the foremost leaders like Fergus O'Connor and Bronterre O'Brien were Irish but it had little effect in Ireland although the Irish workers in Britain participated as part of the British working class:



"The depression of 1842 led to a wave of strikes, as workers responded to the wage cuts imposed by employers. Calls for the implementation of the Charter were soon included alongside demands for the restoration of wages to previous levels. Working people went on strike in 14 English and 8 Scottish counties, principally in the Midlands, Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, and the Strathclyde region of Scotland. Typically strikers resolved to cease work until wages were increased 'until the People's charter becomes the Law of the Land'."

Scotland participated in the forefront of the *Great Unrest* from 1911-1914; one of its most important actions was the strike of 11,000 women workers at the Singer Sewing Machine factory in Clydebank in 1911. This laid the basis for the Red Clydeside movement and rise of syndicalist trade union militancy post war up to the 1930s. The whole greater Glasgow area, along the banks of the Clyde from Clydebank to Greenock, Paisley and other towns participated. This is a very important part of the history of the whole British working class. In contrast the Great Dublin Lockout and General Strike of 1913 was betrayed by the British TUC and left syndicalist Benn Tillet on a defence-of-the-Empire basis, making the bloody fight for Irish self-determination in 1916 and after inevitably. [6]

Trust was lost between the Irish working class represented by its organisations and the British labour movement, whose leaders had put defence of the Empire before working class solidarity. That solidarity could now only be established through separation and on the grounds of full national sovereignty, which makes equality its first premise. British trade union problems between Scotland and England/Wales never acquired that character, because that was not the objective situation. Scotland's bourgeoisie were not a "semi-oppressed, semi-oppressing class" as Trotsky described the colonial and semi-colonial bourgeoisie; they were and are an Imperialist bourgeoisie.

The history of the Scottish working class since has been as the leaders of the whole British working class. They fought in the general strike of 1926, in the great industrial battles of the early 70s that brought down the Heath Government in 1974 and in the great miners' strike of 1984-5. The specifically Scottish trade unions have all but disappeared. National strikes are always fought on a British basis and the Scottish working class has long been the vanguard of the British working-class.

The latest betrayal of the Grangemouth workers and the Royal Mail postal workers by Len McCluskey of Unite and Billy Hayes of the Communication Workers Union argues for a rejection of economic nationalism. The Grangemouth dispute was sold out by Unite's Len McCluskey to defend "Scottish jobs for Scottish workers" and betray the workers of the whole island. Clearly far more concessions will need to be made at Grangemouth to protect "British" jobs and, once the full capacity of the "new wave of giant refineries in Asia and the Middle East" come on stream in 2017 the

plant will probably close anyway. Bob Crow's economic nationalism and Europhobia is a pressing threat to the entire working class movements and those who are revolutionary internationalists must conduct a sharp political struggle against it. McCluskey at Grangemouth and Billy Hayes at the Royal Mail in conjunction with Ed Miliband have struck a treacherous blow at the only force that can solve this crisis; the organised strength of the international working class led by a reformed Fourth International. As Trotskyists we do not therefore collapse before this global crisis but turn towards that class with renewed and urgent struggles to build that leadership that will take forward the struggle to build the rank and file Grass Roots movement in Unite and every other union to oust this treacherous bureaucracy and replace them with more militant and revolutionary leaders who will face up to the central task of overturning capitalist property relations themselves on a global scale."

Notes

[1] *Former Scottish Socialist Party leader promotes nationalism in referendum campaign*, By Steve James and Jordan Shilton, 5 July 2014, <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2014/07/05/sher-j05.html>. This does not mean we endorse the WWS/SEP position on self-determination in general which denies this right, even to oppressed nations like the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

[2] In fact they changed from anti-NATO to pro-NATO. "No Nukes, No NATO" was a 30 year-old central plank of SNP policy from its CND leftist past but the defeat of the Margo MacDonald left wing signified a right turn to the SNP middle-of-the-road support. Salmond and his deputy John Swinney managed to rail-road through a change of line at the 2012 party conference leaving much of the rank and file furious at what they (rightly) saw as a betrayal.

[3] *Interview: Don't march with nationalists*, <http://weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1011/interview-dont-march-with-nationalists/>

[4] *John Wight, Scottish Independence Obscures the Real Divide In Society*, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/john-wight/scottish-independence-obscures-real-divide- b_5714057.html

[5] Leon Trotsky, *The National Question in Catalonia*, (July 1931), <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/07/spain01.htm>

[6] Socialist Fight, *The North of Ireland and the Socialist Party*; "Ben Tillett, the dockers' leader who Larkin had considered a fellow supporter, "wielded the knife that struck the fatal blow". <http://socialistfight.com/tag/dublin/>

Statement of the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International, 8 September 2014

The organizations of the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International did not reach a common agreement about what tactics to adopt on the referendum on the independence of Scotland. The Communist League of Brazil and the Bolshevik Militant Tendency of Argentina argues for a "yes" vote but Socialist Fight of Great Britain argues for a "no" vote. Our young proto-international, which aspires to build as a centralized international party, has not built enough internal structures to act on the majority position by an internal LCFI vote on this issue. We don't hide our internal disagreements about this tactic and we believe that the publication of the two positions is the most honest way of dealing with the topic before the working-class, the oppressed and its world class vanguard.

PLEBISCITE FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF SCOTLAND

Vote "YES!" against imperialism and the British monarchy and for workers' control of Scottish energy resources!

<http://socialistfight.com/2014/09/08/plebiscite-for-the-independence-of-scotland-cl-brazil-tmb-argentina/>

Full statement here: Socialist Fight statement on the Scottish referendum on 18 September: Vote NO

<http://socialistfight.com/2014/09/08/socialist-fight-statement-on-the-scottish-referendum-on-18-september-vote-no-8-september-2014/>

See also: Reply to Bruce Wallace: *From the Bruce to the Broons*. By Gerry Downing, <http://socialistfight.com/2014/09/16/reply-to-bruce-wallace-from-the-bruce-to-the-broons-1/>

LU Glasgow South on Scottish Referendum

22 September 2014 (submitted by Sandy McBurney)

The Scottish referendum has to be understood in the context of a capitalist society which is now not merely somewhat rotten, but actually in a state of decay and threatening to disintegrate in many parts of the world. The move to finance capital effectively announced by the end of the Bretton Woods system in 1971 resulted in Britain and other advanced capitalist countries removing much of their industrial base and marginalising from society large sections of the working class. The parasitic nature of the dominant finance capital is absolutely clear to anyone with a basic Marxist understanding of society and both could and should be pointed out to the mass of society.

SCOTTISH NATIONALISM

The move to Scottish nationalism is instead a dead end – part of the process of disintegration of capitalism. However, the campaign was effectively posed by both the populist leadership of the SNP, and by the section of the left which supported the nationalist campaign, as a means of escaping the effects of capitalist crisis by declaring a separate state. Effectively the message of the Yes campaign for Scottish separation was that the local capitalist class in Scotland would guarantee a type of social democratic paradise in one country in contrast to the austerity attacks in the rest of the world.

This was clearly an illusion – the viability of the new Scottish state was predicated on the provision of a competitive tax system and flexible labour market in an attempt to attract investment and engage the rUK in a disastrous race to the bottom – and the promises of the SNP administration to maintain the entire existing economic, political and military structures even attempting to retain the currency marked it out as an absolute falsehood.

THE SCOTTISH LEFT

The collapse into left-nationalism of much of the Scottish left stems from an inability to grasp the nature of capitalism today, an abandonment of the belief in the political agency of the working class and the resultant toxic mix of opportunism and desperation. As socialists, the only independence we should advocate is the independence of the working class. Supporting the creation of a new capitalist state, and the concomitant nation-building project, results in the binding - and ultimately the subjugation in the name of 'national interest' - of the interests of labour to capital in the vain hope that the new Scottish capitalist class will be more benign than the British capitalist class.

Beyond ignoring the global nature and strength of finance capital which will resist even the most modest reforms, the collapse into populist nationalism has resulted in the division of the working class in both Scotland- between yes and no supporters – and between the working class in Scotland and England: a division which makes a united socialist movement all the more remote.

AFTER THE REFERENDUM

Rejecting Scottish nationalism should not lead us to embrace any variant of British chauvinism or nostalgia for the Britain of 1945. Instead, we should reject nationalism in all its forms, work to overcome the division sown by nationalism and fight for the political independence of the working class across Europe and a united European socialist movement. Left Unity should therefore:

- Oppose nationalist and separatist projects where no national oppression exists, while supporting the right to national self-determination;
- Commit to the political independence of the working class and the unity of the working class across national borders;
- Affirm Left Unity's commitment to building a united Europe-wide socialist movement as a matter of urgency.

Statement agreed at a branch meeting of Left Unity Glasgow South on 19/9/14.

Ferguson; America's continued contempt for Black Life

By Ailish Dease

Ferguson, a two thirds Black town in Missouri (one of the most segregated states in the US) made headline news on August 9th. Michael Brown (MB) an unarmed Black teenager was shot by a police officer after being stopped for walking in the street. His body was left in the street uncovered for four and a half hours. His murder sparked weeks of unrest.

A Pew poll [1] shows the racial divide here, 80% of African Americans (AF-Ams) felt the shooting of Michael Brown raised important issues about race but only 37% of whites did. Black people's interaction with the police involves mostly disrespect, harassment and violence.

The persistence of negative stereotypes and images that perpetuates assumptions of Black inferiority reduces the chance for the majority of white people to empathize with the Black experience (Dr. E. Bonilla Silva "Racism without Racists" 2009)

USA Today reported Federal Crime Stats that an unarmed Black person is killed every 28 hours by police, security guard, or self-appointed vigilante. Michael Brown's shooting is not an isolated event. 18% of the Black people killed in that period were under 21 years of age, compared to 8.7% of Whites. So what happened in Ferguson is just business as usual for the police.

Immediately after the killing of MB, the police, the politicians and the Media attempted to smear the character of Michael Brown. Whenever there is a Black victim of police brutality the Media *always* try to make out that it was their own fault. Michael Brown is being put on trial for his own murder. All the smears came after, in order to justify the killing.

The same thing happened with Trayvon Martin. Michael Brown was systematically dehumanized, the Media was invested in making the police officer the victim instead of the dead teenager. Six witnesses have given almost identical accounts of what happened to MB. He was unarmed, had his hands up and was shot six times.

The initial story from the police for every single unarmed AF-Am they shoot is ALWAYS the same: "He was going for my weapon, I felt threatened". Until the video is released, then the story changes and continues to change as more evidence is released

Initially the chief of police attempted to sell the fiction that MB was stopped for strong arm robbery, when in fact he wasn't. The shop owner said no robbery occurred and neither the owner nor an employee called the police.

Before Ferguson police released the identity of the cop (Darren Wilson) who killed Michael Brown, they released a video which was 'edited' by the police. The chief of police finally admitted that he lied about the part which was "edited". The part of the video cut out of the version released by the cops showed Brown paying for the cigars. The confrontation was over him not showing ID. The cops only contacted the store owner the day they released the video

Darren Wilson was in a police force before Ferguson, in Jennings, where the white police force was all fired because:

Law enforcement in the town were reportedly overwhelmed with complaints about racial bias, harassment, strained relations between the nearly all white police officers and a community that was 89% Black... at least five other police officers and one former officer in the town's 53-member department have been named in civil rights lawsuits alleging the use of excessive force. In four federal lawsuits, including one that is on appeal, and more than a half-dozen investigations over the past decade, colleagues of Darren Wilson's have separately contested a variety of allegations, including killing a mentally ill man with a Taser, pistol-whipping a child, choking and hog-tying a child and beating a man who was later charged with destroying city property because his blood spilled on officers' clothes." [2]



Darren Wilson's supporters have raised over half a million dollars for him on 'gofundme' and the Support Darren Wilson Facebook page got 42,000 "likes" in a week

Historians estimate that during the late 19th and early 20th century, 2 – 3 Black people were lynched every week in the American South. (100 Years of Lynchings by Ralph Ginzburg). As late as the 1920s Lynched Black bodies would be left hanging on public display for days or weeks to terrorise Black people. In this same way Michael Brown's body was left uncovered, his brains spilled onto the street, rotting in the baking sun for over four and a half hours. This was one of the reasons why the execution of Michael Brown was a flash-point because of this historical memory (echoing down the centuries) that it evoked)

At least one so called 'socialist' site in their first report on the killing did not bother to state that Brown was Black. Obama and Holder did not say how Michael Brown was killed. Not to say how Brown was killed is an attempt to disconnect this from the historical narrative, the history of lynchings, Jim Crow, harassment and all kinds of terror unleashed on Black people since they were brought to America against their will.

The brave people of Ferguson peacefully protested against the murder of Michael Brown, but they were met with assault rifles, armoured tanks, rubber bullets and teargas. A riot broke out and there was looting. The media (whose only interest is sensationalism) blew this up. Black people were condemned for being "violent".

Americans refuse to accept the facts of their own long history of violence. They can't accept the gravity of their crimes. Genocide-giving smallpox infected blankets to Native Americans and thus wiping out whole Nations. Slavery and Jim Crow up until the 1970s, the Tuskegee experiment 1932-1974. [3] America is 238 years old and has been at war for 215 of those years. America has been killing and stealing from every other nation on earth. So it is a bit rich for Americans to be blaming Black people for violence.

Of course no American alive now is responsible for what was done to the Native people etc. but they have benefited from the outcome, witnessing the injustices and the inequality they should do something about it.

America's continued contempt for Black Life

More important the repression and violence that Native and Black people are being subjected to will happen to ordinary working Americans when they decide to stand up for their jobs/better working conditions/against the warmongers, or when the dollar crashes

The violence in Ferguson has its roots in the lack of jobs and no way out of the poverty trap. A [recent report](#) from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) notes that:

Black unemployment has been twice that of whites for 50 years, this gap hasn't closed at all since 1963. Back then, the unemployment rate was 5 percent for whites and 10.9 percent for blacks. Today, it's 6.6 percent for whites and 12.6 percent for blacks. In 2011, 27.6 percent of black households were in poverty — nearly triple the poverty rate for whites.” 40 percent of Black children in America are growing up beneath the federal government's notoriously inadequate poverty level. [4]

The government's botched priorities are evident in the fact that the Department of Defense budget request for fiscal year 2012 was for \$553 billion, an increase of \$22 billion over the 2010 appropriation. This money could have been better spent creating jobs and on job training and education for people throughout America.

Some Black people are also complicit in upholding the system of racism, having internalized the idea of Black criminality/inferiority. Preachers/politicians/hustlers like Al Sharpton have the nerve to lecture the people of Ferguson who are the victims of violence instead of confronting the SOURCE of that violence. “America is the greatest purveyor of violence in the world” (Martin Luther King) Where is Sharpton's criticism of capitalism, racism and militarism?

These misleaders of the Black community claim that Black people need to vote more, if they had voted then they could have had more Black policemen etc. This nonsense is beyond belief, there are many cities with Black Mayors and Black police where Black people are treated badly, it's not just about cops. Black people *have* voted ... they even voted for a Black president! And they are worst off than they were..

Black elected officials and Black cops do NOT change the nature of the Capitalist/imperialist state. It changes nothing in Black working class experience under persistent US racial apartheid and inequality. It merely serves to legitimize the armed occupation of the Black communities. Black people are waging a struggle against sys-



Preachers/politicians/hustlers like Al Sharpton have the nerve to lecture the people of Ferguson who are the victims of violence instead of confronting the SOURCE of that violence. “America is the greatest purveyor of violence in the world” (Martin Luther King) Where is Sharpton's criticism of capitalism, racism and militarism?



A doctor draws blood from one of the Tuskegee test subjects.

tematic and institutional Racist oppression and economic exploitation and part of this is class war.

In the 1960s the Black Panther Party had warned about the creeping militarization of the police. They were facing down SWAT Teams and snipers *then* for organizing the community against police brutality, providing free breakfast programs and free healthcare services which the state should provide but doesn't. Now things are so much worse with each war since then, the state has given more military hardware to local Police departments, preparing for the war to come on the Civilian population.

On October 9th 2014 new protests have erupted in St Louis after an off-duty police officer working for a private security firm in St. Louis fatally shot an 18-year-old black man.... These murders will only end when these police are charged with murder and all costs are taken from the police pension funds.

The people of Ferguson by their determination to stand up for Justice exposed the United States police State and all its military apparatus to show the world America's war of Terror on Black people.

Notes

[1] Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social science research. <http://www.people-press.org/about/>

[2] See more at: <http://www.blackpressusa.com/2014/08/at-least-5-ferguson-officers-apart-from-brown-shooter-have-been-named-in-lawsuits/#sthash.YHoy4sRL.dpuf>

[3] The Tuskegee syphilis experiment was an infamous clinical study conducted between 1932 and 1972 by the U.S. Public Health Service to study the natural progression of untreated syphilis in rural African American men who thought they were receiving free health care from the U.S. government... They were never told they had syphilis, nor were they ever treated for it. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the men were told they were being treated for “bad blood”, a local term for various illnesses that include syphilis, anemia, and fatigue...As part of the settlement of a class action lawsuit subsequently filed by the NAACP, the U.S. government paid \$9 million (unadjusted for inflation) and agreed to provide free medical treatment to surviving participants and to surviving family members infected as a consequence of the study.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuskegee_syphilis_experiment

[4] Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* 1998

Internationalism; the watchword from Gaza to Ukraine to Ferguson, Missouri, LCFI statement on the police murder of Michael Brown, 19/8/2014

"The Social-Democrat's (i.e. Revolutionary Socialists before 1914 – LCFI) ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat." Lenin. [\[1\]](#)

Eighteen year old Black man, Michael Brown, was murdered on August 9, 2014 by Officer Darren Wilson, in Ferguson, Missouri. He was unarmed and shot multiple times by Wilson. The details are given by his friend, Dorian Johnson, 22 as related by Trymaine Lee:

"...Brown and Johnson took off running together. There were three cars lined up along the side of the street. Johnson says he ducked behind the first car, whose two passengers were screaming. Crouching down a bit, he watched Brown run past.

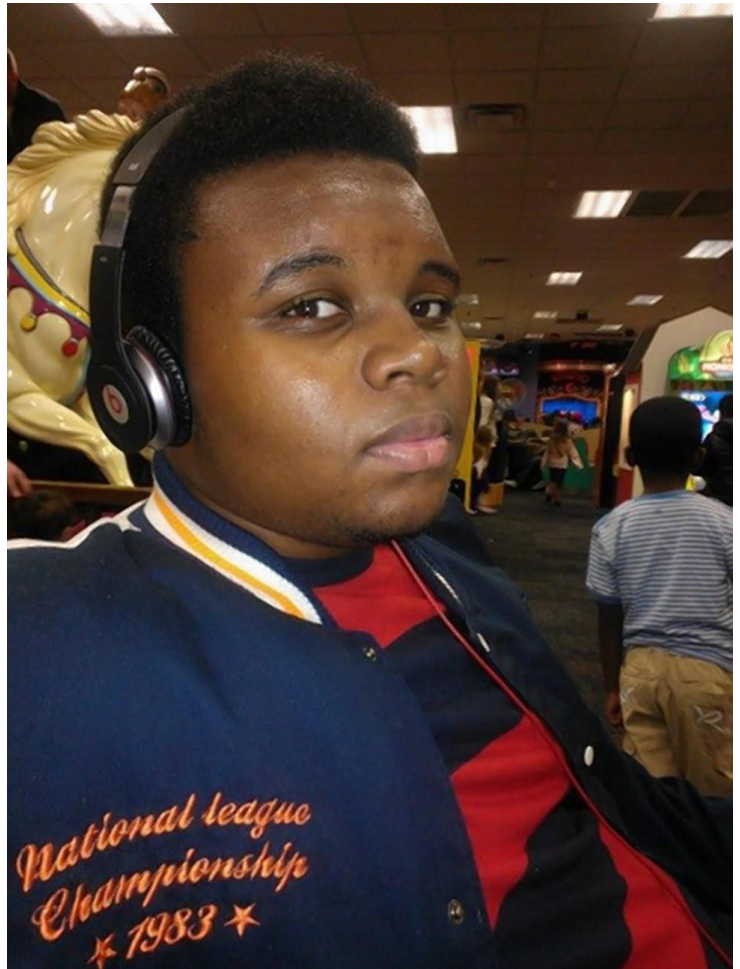
"Keep running, bro!," he said Brown yelled. Then Brown yelled it a second time. Those would be the last words Johnson's friend, "Big Mike," would ever say to him. Brown made it past the third car. Then, "blam!" the officer took his second shot, striking Brown in the back. At that point, Johnson says Brown stopped, turned with his hands up and said "I don't have a gun, stop shooting!" By that point, Johnson says the officer and Brown were face-to-face. The officer then fired several more shots. Johnson described watching Brown go from standing with his hands up to crumbling to the ground and curling into a foetal position. [\[2\]](#)

Brutal police slayings of Black men in the US are frequent but only some provoke the reaction that this one did. The severe beating of Rodney King in 1992 provoked far wider and more violent protests, as Steve Argue relates:

"In the case of Rodney King, despite videotape showing the cops using enough force to kill a man, the police were acquitted in their first trial. In that case it took a mass six day uprising in 1992 that destroyed over a billion dollars in property to win a new trial for the criminal cops. In the subsequent trial, two cops, Koon and Powell, were found guilty. For a change, two brutal cops went to prison for their crimes. In addition, the 1992 uprising forced the resignation of LA's Chief of Police. On a small scale, property was also redistributed through "looting". Yet, the people paid a heavy price for this action with all kinds of repressive government forces mobilized in the streets including the Marines, 53 people were killed, around 2,000 people were injured, and nearly 20,000 people arrested." [\[3\]](#)

The Los Angeles riots of 1992 were the worst in the USA in terms of death toll after the New York City draft riots of 1863. They were an incoherent outburst of rage at the terrible oppression of the Black and Latino communities. The majority of the 53 dead were Black, but they included some 15 Latinos and 10 whites + a few Asians. They came in the wake of world historical events globally, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the break-up of the USSR and the obscene crowing of the neo-liberal establishment about the "end of history". Wiki elaborates:

"*The End of History and the Last Man* is a 1992 book by Francis Fukuyama, expanding on his 1989 essay "The End of History?" published in the international affairs journal *The National Interest*. In the book, Fukuyama argues that the advent of Western liberal democracy may signal the endpoint of humanity's sociocultural evolution and the final form of human government. "What we may be witnessing is not just



Michael Brown brutally slain by police Officer Darren Wilson on 9 August

the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." Fukuyama's position contradicts that of Karl Marx, who imagined that antagonistic history would end with communism displacing capitalism." [\[4\]](#)

We may be sure that the 1992 uprising was not a conscious response to these international events but we are equally certain that that was its material basis and objective driving force. This was reflected in at least a very deep sense of foreboding unease in the consciousness of the masses who sensed some of what was happening. The ruling class of America were predicting oppression and exploitation without end or opposition of every nation on the planet and the working class in the US and everywhere else. Whilst the USSR stood there was hope in what was a distorted and bureaucratic opposition, but was nevertheless an opposition, might hold back and even defeat their oppressors. It was gone now but nevertheless the Los Angeles oppressed gave them their answer to the question "will they fight?" George Bush's New World Order was going to be challenged not only politically and in foreign wars but on the streets of the cities of the USA itself.

Therefore, since humanity can only liberate itself from global capitalism and its modern expression, imperialism, by slaying the

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beast in its lair, how the US working class goes about their historical task and if they succeed is of vital importance. Los Angeles did succeed in driving back the offensive for a period but the altogether different political circumstances and response to the killing of Michael Brown has shown that that offensive has now taken a new and more deadly and threatening aspect than even 1992. To understand this we must take the global circumstances into account, we must take the US political circumstance into account and, most importantly, we must get the relationship between racial oppression and working class oppression right by understanding how this has evolved in the USA.

Today the global economic and political crisis leaves no room for illusions about the “end of history”. Wars are raging in Libya, Syria, Iraq and the Ukraine, chaos, broken states and plans for war against Iran, Russia and China are afoot to hold together US hegemony of global imperialism. US ‘recovery’, far better than Europe or Japan, is essentially at the expense of their rival imperialist powers and the semi-colonial world. Falling global profit rates is driving WWII as the objective laws of capital impinge on the consciousness of the Republican Neo-Cons and Democrats alike. It impinges on the consciousness of the far left too but many are taking the side of imperialism over its wars, Ukraine being the latest example. Our faith is in the working class and the new forces that are emerging to represent them in a revolutionary way.

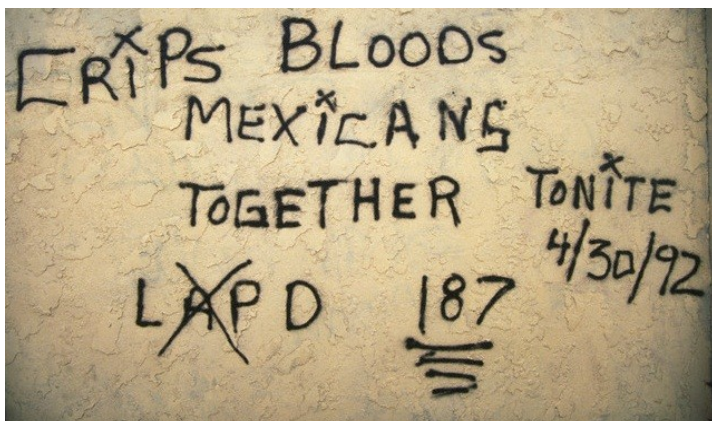
Why the reaction to the Killing of Michael Brown was so violent

The riots in Ferguson were initially about the killing of Michael Brown and probably would have only lasted one night or might not have turned violent at all but for the extreme and violent reaction of the police. It is reported that people from Gaza were tweeting people from Ferguson on how to protect themselves from tear gas.

Press photographers were instructed to stop taking pictures and leave the scene and two reporters were arrested. But it was the military riot gear deployed at what were initially peaceful protesters against what all knew to be a brutal police murder that amazed everyone. Jelani Cobb, a writer for the *New Yorker*, noted: “If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. If you have a tank every protest looks like an insurgency”. As Press TV reports:

“Slowly, every police department in the United States, at the behest of the Department of Homeland Security, is being trained by Israeli groups. As part of this training, there is an increased move to use of military uniforms, armoured vehicles, heavy weapons, illegal surveil-

Successful appeal for race and class unity in the Lost Angeles uprising in 1992



“The images and scenes we continue to see in Ferguson resemble war more than traditional police action,” Republican Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky

lance, lying to the people, press and courts and systematic interference in the electoral system. They are becoming “Israeli.”” [\[5\]](#)

Lest it be thought that Press TV are alarmists only report in a sensationalist way we have the objections of a Republican Senator:

“The images and scenes we continue to see in Ferguson resemble war more than traditional police action,” Republican Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky wrote today in a column for Time, calling for police agencies to be demilitarized. Another U.S. Senator, Missouri Democrat Claire McCaskill, has said local law enforcement officials need to “demilitarize” the situation in Ferguson... Given the images from Missouri, some veterans have observed that they patrolled foreign combat zones equipped with less armour than the police in Ferguson, which is northwest of St. Louis. [\[6\]](#)

For those leftists who think in their backward and syndicalist way that what happens in Gaza, Ukraine and Iraq is nothing to do with the working class in the US or UK and we can fight austerity through our trade union structures and “force the left bureaucrats to fight” by enough grass roots pressure here is the answer. The ruling class have prepared their answer; they have psyched up their police forces and given them enough military hardware to silence every protest. And they are again playing the race card in the USA, as ever.

Was the slaying of Michael Brown Race or Class?

Both, of course, and it's how the dialectical interrelationship of the two plays out in the USA that makes the difference between commenting and leading politically. Unlike the 1930s today the vast majority of industrial workers in the USA are Black. They make up a disproportionate section of the prison population, of the unemployed and ghetto poor. But an even more oppressed section are the “illegals” the 12 million + mainly Latino workers who do all the menial tasks for dirt wages and who cannot complain or properly unionise because of their immigrant status. But their cause can only really be defended by the organised working class and the state's prime object is to keep the class divided on race, sex, immigration and any other issue it can dredge up. The War on Terror never replaced race, it was rather a refinement of it as is the current anti-Immigrant children brouhaha on the Mexican border.

Let us affirm now that this was a racist murder, it was also an attack on the entire working class and oppressed so it is a class issue too. Only those lost in hopeless syndicalist dogmatism would make a rigid counterposition between the two in the USA in particular with all its history of Black slavery and Jim Crow lynchings and the Ku Klux Klan. Socialist Fight polemicised against David North WWS/SEP on the killing of Trayvon Martin on just this point:

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This brings us to the posting on the WSWS site on 5 April by Joseph Kishore entitled, The killing of Trayvon Martin and racial politics in America. The piece seeks to prove that it was class and not race that motivated the murder and those who were trying to impute racial motives to George Zimmerman were defending the capitalist system and trying to divert the anger of the masses away from its real cause and into the blind alley of 'identity politics'. Zimmerman, the killer, was not motivated ostensibly by a white racist agenda and the fact that Martin was black – this very likely had nothing to do with the case. We must be sure of this – because Kishore informs us:

“Racial prejudice may have played a role in the killing of Martin, who was African-American. The initial public reaction, however, did not focus on race, but rather on the gross injustice involved. As Martin’s mother, Sabrina Fulton, put it, “It’s not about black and white, it’s about right and wrong.”

As if the two were counterposed. Again the gross reductionalism: all black people must forget about the history of imperialist barbarism and slavery and get on with uniting with whites against capitalism. Kishore, in directing his anger against the ‘ex-lefts’ makes the following outrageous counterposition:

“Toward this end, these forces have put forward a grossly distorted picture of American society, politics and history—one in which race, and not class, is the central issue.”

The history of the USA is about class and NOT race is it? Of course behind the Civil War and the Jim Crow laws is class, the divide and rule, the poor whites and the Ku Klux Klan but given this history then we absolutely cannot ignore, downplay or even dispute its racial content or the racial motivation of the Zimmerman murder or we can justly be called racist ourselves.

...Every black workers is both black and a worker, they have a history of both race and class oppression and are experiencing it right now. To tell them to ignore the race and concentrate on the class, is itself lecturing, bordering on racism. To assert it is race and not class is equally wrong. [7]

To assert it is race only and not class is equally wrong. Barack Obama sent his Attorney General Eric Holder to lead the investigation into the killing of Michael Brown, Black Democratic Party luminaries Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson turned up and they had the same message; “we are not anti-police, we respect police,” we need more black cops the better to get the black youth to accept repression.

The National of Islam were there too to add to the appeal to get the youth to accept their oppression. They sent in black Missouri police Captain Ron Johnson who organised the sending in of the National Guard. They are all diversionary leaders who will betray the struggles of the Black youth and try threat utmost to prevent the alliances with Latino immigrants and white worker which is the only path to victory.

Conclusion

We have sought to prove that the slaying of Michael Brown and the reaction to it by both the police and protestors is an integral part of the global class struggle now being waged from Gaza to Syria to Libya to Iraq and the Ukraine to mention but the hot spots. These are the global class struggle just as much as a strike or a general strike itself. We opened with a quote from Lenin to show how backward and syndicalist the model of the English trade union branch secretary was, “the ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but



the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears”. From the combination of Lenin’s insistence of the essence of imperialism the rule being global finance capital and the division of the world into oppressed and oppressor nations there arises not only the duty of Ferguson to rally to the cause of Gaza and Iraq and the Ukraine and also to their own ‘illegal’ migrant workers.

And, as the opposite side of that same coin, the duty of all those to rally to the cause of Ferguson. We think we have seen enough of that internationalism in the global and US wide demonstrations for Gaza and Ferguson to be confident that the great heart of the global working class is still beating strongly and internationalism is becoming ever more their watchword. In this we place our trust and from these we seek to reforge the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

•Justice for Michael Brown!

•Fight Police-State Terrorism!

•For Armed Workers’ Self-Defense to Protect Ourselves, Our Families and Our Homes!

•Towards a Revolutionary Party of the Multiracial Working Class

Notes

[1] Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions of our Movement*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/iii.htm>

[2] *Eyewitness to Michael Brown shooting recounts his friend’s death* 08/12/14 By Trymaine Lee, <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/eyewitness-michael-brown-fatal-shooting-missouri>

[3] *Underground America, Missouri: Direct Actions Challenge the Epidemic of Police Murders in the United States*, August 14, 2014, By Steven Argue <http://copscrucial.blogspot.co.uk/2014/08/missouri-direct-actions-challenge.html>

[4] *The End of History and the Last Man*, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_End_of_History_and_the_Last_Man

[5] Press TV, *American police now “Israeli-DHS trained,” precursor to dictatorship*, <http://www.presstv.com/detail/2012/08/10/255432/us-police-now-israelidhs-trained/>

[6] Bloomberg Business Week; *A Federal Effort to Reuse Military Gear Turned Cops Into Commandos*, By Justin Bachman August 14, 2014, <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-08-14/ferguson-shooting-how-military-gear-ended-up-with-local-police>

[6] *The killing of Trayvon Martin and David North’s SEP*, By Tony Fox July 2012, <http://socialistfight.com/2014/08/16/the-killing-of-trayvon-martin-and-david-norths-sep-a-backward-workerist-reductionalist-political-current-by-tony-fox-july-2012/>

A misrepresentation of Trotsky on the Ukraine by a petty bourgeois moralist: A reply to Michael Calderbank, By Oliver Coxhead

In a recent post on the social networking site Facebook LRC leading member and supporter of the 'Ukrainian Solidarity Campaign' Michael Calderbank attempted to give political and even revolutionary weight to his reactionary position on the current crisis in Ukraine. Under the entry 'What Trotsky had to say to the "sectarian muddleheads" who opposed the independence of Ukraine' we have the following article by Trotsky from 1939 re-posted: *Independence of the Ukraine and Sectarian Muddleheads*. Above the link to Trotsky's article Calderbank quotes what we must assume he sees as the significant paragraph of the text and the justification for his position and his opposition to those in the Labour movement who take the anti-imperialist/anti-fascist position:

"To speed and facilitate this process, to make possible a genuine brotherhood of the peoples in the future, the advanced workers of Great Russia must even now understand the causes for Ukrainian separatism, as well the latent power and historical lawfulness behind it, and they must without any reservation declare to the Ukrainian people that they are ready to support with all their might the slogan of an independent Soviet Ukraine in a joint struggle against the autocratic bureaucracy and against imperialism."

This is Trotsky's call for Ukrainian independence at a time when Ukraine suffered under the Stalinist bureaucracy, he made it clear though that it must be an independent 'Soviet Ukraine' as an ally militarily to the USSR. Later in his article Trotsky states that Ukraine 'will herself desire and know how to reach the necessary economic agreement with the Soviet Union, just as she herself will be able to conclude the necessary military alliance.'

Trotsky was clear that independence must be bound up with preservation of planned economy and socialised property created by the October Revolution and, as such, would mean defence of the gains in the rest of soviet territory despite the rule of the degenerate bureaucracy.

The national independence of Soviet Ukraine would mean the plan could be tailored to the needs of the Ukrainian people and not the Kremlin bureaucracy, but they would still support the plan of the rest of the USSR because it would 'know how to make the necessary economic agreement' and therefore improve the rationality of the plan. Consequently an independent Soviet Ukraine would not only weaken the Kremlin bureaucracy but also improve the plan for Ukraine and thereby give an impetus to socialist development in the rest of the USSR.

Trotsky was clear that the bureaucracy's strangulation of the Ukraine had turned many of the masses, such as the peasantry and petty bourgeois as well as workers and emigrants of Ukraine, away from socialism which they had previously supported. The official communist movement headed by the Kremlin bureaucracy had no answer to Ukrainian independence as it stifled national expression and implemented disastrous agricultural policies. The loudest voices in favour of Ukrainian independence were the [fascists and religious reactionary leaders](#):

"Of enormous political importance is the sharp turn away from the Soviet Union by Ukrainian democratic elements outside the Soviet Union. When the Ukrainian problem became aggravated early this year



Prince Charles' timely statement "Now Putin is doing [in Ukraine] just about the same as Hitler", which intimates that Moscow rather than Kiev has embraced a neo-Nazi Agenda. Look at the photos displayed in the BBC's report. The BBC suggests that these Right Sector thugs are acting responsibly. (Photo showing Right Sector activists outside parliament in Kiev, 28 Mar 14)

communist voices were not heard at all; but the voices of the Ukrainian clericals and National Socialists were loud enough. This means that the proletarian vanguard has let the Ukrainian national movement slip out of its hands and this movement has progressed far on the road to separatism."

The answer Trotsky stressed was for the revolutionary workers' movement to lead the desire for national independence as part of continuing socialist revolution, i.e. the political revolution against the Kremlin bureaucracy. In the case of Ukraine, to demand independence from centralised bureaucratic rule while defending the gains of the revolution and improving them by fulfilling the needs of the local population and to integrate with other soviet republics as part of the ongoing development for socialism.

To ignore the desire for independence meant sections of the masses would be driven to bourgeois nationalism and fascism. Trotsky was therefore clear it must be an independent soviet Ukraine. This is in complete opposition to the Ukraine envisaged by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists led by Nazi Stepan Bandera. This position must be seen in the context of its time, the late 1930s on the eve of imperialist war and military threats to the USSR, the world's first workers' state.

Now we must examine Calderbank's use or rather misuse of Trotsky's article today. Firstly, he is of course using it completely in the wrong context; the USSR no longer exists and, obviously, this has thrown back consciousness of many workers' in Ukraine and Russia. Ukraine is independent as a bourgeois republic, not a soviet republic and its borders have altered several times since Trotsky wrote his article. It is not Trotsky who is wrong though but Calderbank who chooses to take the article out of context as justification for adopting an anti-working class position.

In the Ukraine now we have the corrupt but elected government of the oligarch Yanukovich deposed by an unelected coup-government comprised of ultra-nationalists and Nazi descendent organisations such as Svoboda. Yet these nationalists plan to give up even their bourgeois independence to the imperialists of the EU and United States. We now have the situation where the Ukraine could

A misrepresentation of Trotsky

become another vassal of US imperialism where once it had been a vassal of the Kremlin bureaucracy, a worse prospect! It would of course then become a NATO member, strengthening US imperialism's military presence right up to the Russian border.

Clearly the imperialism of the US and EU means no true independence for Ukraine. There was more independence under the local capitalists of Yanukovich. Imperialism will mean the domination of Ukraine and Ukrainian workers by the IMF and World Bank as well as US corporations. The economic deals local oligarchs had with Russian capitalists were more beneficial to the population than would be imperialist domination. Russia is not an imperialist country, it is undoubtedly a capitalist one but has offered a better economic deal to Ukraine. The EU offers de-industrialisation, privatisation, wage cuts, social security cuts and debt. Workers in Ukraine can look to Greece, Ireland and Portugal to see their future, behind which is the finance capital and military of the U.S., ever too keen to enforce compliance using local fascist gangs. What sort of independence is that? Calderbank is silent on these facts.

In the Donbass region, focused around Luhansk and Donetsk, there has been a groundswell of opposition by the working class to the Maidan and its coup-government which includes fascists. Calderbank's lack of dialectical thinking means that he cannot conclude that today's officially 'independent' Ukraine dominated by oligarchs and facing the domination of US/EU finance capital has developed its own internal movement for regional independence in the face of this imperialist onslaught. Trotsky's method applied today means support for Ukrainian independence from US/EU imperialism and the self-determination of those regions which are at the forefront of the opposition to imperialism and its fascist gangs. [Trotsky warned in the article](#) Calderbank cites as his justification that 'the very independence of the Ukraine would not be long lived in an imperialist environment' and that 'imperialism can be overthrown only by the proletarian revolution.' We see the proletariat of eastern Ukraine now in open revolution and expropriating the oligarchs, and Trotsky spoke of the Ukraine as having developed a strong working class: "A powerful and purely Ukrainian proletariat has been created there by the development of industry. It is they who are destined to be the leaders of the Ukrainian people in all their future struggles."

This same proletariat has its very existence threatened and its own rights in particular the right to speak their first language. As mentioned earlier the borders of Ukraine have altered considerably since 1939 and many Russian speakers live in the east and have intermixed with Ukrainian speakers. The calls for Ukrainian independence and 'national unity' by Calderbank and the 'Ukrainian Solidarity Campaign' mean a centralised ultra-nationalist state which suppresses the rights of minorities. Trotsky also had something to say about these opportunist supporters of 'independence': "Opportunism consists in a passive adaptation to the ruling class and its regime, to that which already exists, including of course, the state boundaries."

Calderbank and his ilk would rather preserve the state boundaries as they are at the expense of the working class in eastern Ukraine, even though they have expressed their will for autonomy through a referendum on this issue. Opportunists such as Calderbank line up with Svoboda, the US and EU to condemn the working class resistance as 'terrorist' and influenced by 'Russian agents', yet nothing is mentioned of the fascist terror gangs, CIA agents and mercenaries operating in Ukraine. Finance capital again uses fascism to impose



According to the BBC, the Right Sector has no Nazi roots, it was formed as an umbrella group in November 2013: "Originally set up as an alliance of ultra-nationalist groups in November 2013, the Right Sector is now a party and its leader, Dmytro Yarosh, is running for president..." The BBC report fails to mention the names of the constituent organizations of Pravy Sektor: They are Trident (Tryzub), led by Dmytro Yarosh and Andriy Tarasenko, and the Ukrainian National Assembly–Ukrainian National Self Defence (UNA–UNSO), a terrorist paramilitary organization supported covertly by NATO (see image below) and several other right wing paramilitary groups. (Photo showing UNA-UNSO Paramilitary)

its domination and, unfortunately, many on the left have chosen to support imperialism in the way they did at the start of WWI a hundred years ago, exposing themselves now as they did then as liberals and not Marxists at all.

Throughout the debates on this fundamental issue of support for the movement against imperialism in the Donbass, many leftists have been outraged at military methods and personnel being employed by the Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples' Republics and the fact some Kiev supporters have been kidnapped or tortured. The liberal prejudices of these middle class liberals and individuals such as Calderbank reveal their hostility toward the working class taking up the struggle against imperialism and fascism, in the course of such struggles that would mean enemies real or suspected will be given a hard time. This is a feature of revolution. They moralise about how 'both sides are as bad' and such arguments, the 'moralizing philistine's favourite method is the lumping of reaction's conduct with that of revolution' Trotsky noted about such leftists. (Source: Trotsky, L, Dewey, J, Novack, G, Their Morals and Ours, Pathfinder, 1973, New York, p13)

Of the middle class moralist, Trotsky wrote:

"Understanding neither the origin nor the sense of struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, discovers himself between the two fires, he will consider both belligerent camps with equal hatred. And who are all these democratic moralists? Ideologists of intermediary layers who have fallen, or are in fear of falling between the two fires. The chief traits of the prophets of this type are alienation from the great historical movements, a hardened conservative mentality, smug narrowness, and a most primitive political cowardice." (Source: Trotsky, L, Pathfinder, 1973, pp. 14-15)

This is a fitting description for Calderbank and the 'Ukrainian Solidarity Campaign' and the social strata they represent, namely the middle class and labour bureaucracy. Meanwhile the working class in the Donbass continues to fight the fascists and imperialists in its quest for survival and self-determination.

Akhenaten, Dweller in Truth

a novel by Naguib Mahfouz, Anchor Books 168 pp.

Reviewer: Alan Hunter

Naguib Mahfouz an Egyptian Novelist who died in 1972 wrote over 40 Novels, short stories and plays, a great majority of them have been translated into English and other Languages.

Akhenaten was the 'Heretic Pharaoh' of the 18th dynasty who launched a revolution in Egypt by eliminating all other Egyptian gods and advocating only one god 'The Aten or Sun God'. By this action Akhenaten sought to remove all the priests and scribes who through corruption had amassed a huge wealth which of course they kept for themselves. Much of Akhenaten's reign and life were shrouded in mystery and many Archaeologists are split on the role he gave to ancient Egypt. The Amarna tablets recently uncovered show that there were discussions between the Mitanni and Egypt.

Akhenaten took a Mitanni Princess Tadukhipa as a wife and she was the daughter of Tushratta the King of Mitanni. In the tablets written using the first languages known Tushratta complains to Akhenaten that he has not received proper payment in gold for his daughter Tadukhipa. In the Valley of the Kings you will find no mention of Akhenaten or his successors, Ay and Tutankhamun his son.

Tutankhamun is famous now because of Howard Carter's excavations in 1920. Akhenaten was a revolutionary who attacked the power of the priests and scribes who had grown rich and corrupt through the wealth of Egypt. The power of Amun is reflected in their continual dedication to him. Akhenaten attacked the temple of Amun and he said there would be only one god and that was The Aten. This belief in one god would be repeated by the Jews and a small sect led by a carpenter from Nazareth called Jesus.

Mahfouz has cleverly interwoven a story of Akhenaten by using a young man called Meriamun who goes back to Amarna to discover the truth about Akhenaten's revolutionary role. After Akhenaten had destroyed the temples and images of Amun at Thebes he moved the capital to what is known as Amarna to the north of Thebes.

Meriamun begins by interviewing all the people who knew and served under Akhenaten, some of them were his devoted followers; others were hostile to him because he had deprived them of a source of wealth. Meriamun first interviews the High Priest of Amun who shows his dislike of Akhenaten "Akhenaten erased his name from all the monuments. He said he meant to erase the name of Amun" [1].

Ay the chief vizier is next interviewed a supporter of Akhenaten at the time but suspected of being involved in his death. "Thebes master (Akhenaten) is nothing but a den of rapacious merchants, debauchery and fornication, who are the these great priests. They delude people with superstition and take from the poor what little they have" [2]. Referring to the high priests Ay comments "He claims that he is concerned for the Empire when in fact he is only worried about his share of the goods that flow into the temple" [3].

Horemheb who would follow him as a Pharaoh would be responsible for Akhenaten's name being removed from the list of Pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings. He was a commander and chief of the army. "I despised him for his weakness and his famine appearance could not picture myself as a friend of his" [4].

"By moving to the new capital Akhenaten declared war on all the deities" [5]. Meriamun comments. In all the wall paintings of Akhenaten and his Wife Nefertiti and their family all that is depicted is a man of peace and love. "Beauty and Peace vanished when Akhenaten left our world" [6].

Meri-Ray, a high priest and a devoted follower of Akhenaten com-



"The fact is that Akhenaten was a very special being. He was a visionary promoting a paradise irreconcilable with human nature".

mented "Perhaps I was the only one who was driven out of Akhenaten by force. I refused to abandon my King. The voice of God was silenced. The temple was destroyed" [7]. Meri-Ray continues "At first he renounced all the deities, then he abolished their worship, confiscated the temples and allocated the patrimonies to the poor" [8].

Bento, his physician, provided a good description on how Akhenaten will be remembered in history "The fact is that Akhenaten was a very special being. He was a visionary promoting a paradise irreconcilable with human nature". [9].

Mahfouz has written a very sympathetic account of Akhenaten an early revolutionary, although a King sought to try and change the system from within. His attack on the priesthood was a revolutionary act, by the destruction of the temples he hoped to erase their influence, but in the end Akhenaten failed. The Amun priesthood was reinstated, Akhenaten was eliminated and the power of the priests installed once again. Mahfouz has cleverly adopted a narrative style and presented a very readable story about a revolutionary in the 18th Dynasty who tried to overthrow the existing belief system.

It would be left to other religious sects like Christianity and Judaism to continue the tradition. It must be pointed out that Christianity is now part of the ruling and ideological basis of capitalism. Atenism which died in the 18th dynasty was a revolutionary movement that for a time sought to transfer wealth from the rich to the poor. Akhenaten was a visionary before his time. Other revolutionaries would follow and Egypt in the 20th Century would again have revolutions firstly starting with the bourgeois revolution of Nasser. Today Egypt is once again in the midst of revolutionary upheavals and it will be the working class that will now overthrow imperialism and capitalism.

Notes

1. *Akhenaten Dweller in Truth, A Novel of Ancient Egypt* p. 13
2. Ibid. p. 30
3. Ibid. 37&50
4. Ibid. pp. 57
5. Ibid p. 64
6. Ibid. p. 103
7. Ibid. p. 107
8. Ibid. p. 107
9. Ibid p. 138

Vote Dilma Rousseff (PT) to defeat Aécio Neves (PSDB), the right and the new offensive of imperialism!

On October 26, 2014, Dilma Rousseff was re-elected president of Brazil, after securing more than 51% of votes in the second round of the closest election race since 1989. An official count showed her rival, centrist candidate Aécio Neves, taking just over 48% of the vote. The following statement, endorsed by Socialist Fight, is a Joint Statement by the Lenin Collective and the Communist League-LCFI for the Second Round of the Brazilian Presidential election before the election.

This statement, produced by the Lenin Collective and the Communist League-LCFI, is a short summary of our position on the political situation we face in the second round of the bourgeois elections. We are calling for a vote for Dilma Rousseff/Workers Party (PT) [1] against the candidate of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) [2], Aécio Neves who is imperialism's and the right's favourite Brazilian con artist. This statement aims to engage directly with our fellow workers in various workplaces where we operate in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

Comrades, the international situation has changed and requires all our firmness to combat imperialism and its agents. After the crisis of 2008 the US and European Union have lost markets to China and Russia. Since 2009, the imperialist countries, led by the US, have begun a counterattack to regain the economic and political domination of regions such as Latin America. In Brazil, which is the a true indicator of the balance of power in the continent, imperialism are putting their money on Aécio Neves of the PSDB to accomplish this mission.

If Aécio defeats Rousseff workers will immediately face increased exploitation and oppression. He is planning to privatise banks and publicly owned Companies, to increase outsourcing of public services, to reduce wages and the historical trade union rights mass layoffs. He aims to reduce the age of criminal responsibility and increase the prison population even further by the mass arrests of youth, and brutal suppression of any opposition from workers to the policies imposed by imperialism. [3]

Policies adopted by the PT such as the pension reform, the pre-salt auctions, [4] the military occupation of workers' neighbourhoods by the UPPs (Pacification Police Units which have placed favelas under a state of siege) in Rio, the privatisation of airports, roads and PPPs (Private Public Partnerships), the occupation of Haiti by the Brazilian Army, the non-implementation of the agrarian reform and the political alliance with sectors of the right have only contributed to demoralising the struggle of the workers and the strengthening of the right wing itself and imperialism.

We call for an anti-imperialist front with the PT to defeat Aécio. It is only workers' organization in their workplaces, neighbourhoods, schools and colleges that go on strike and demonstrate in defence of their rights and interests that can prevent the imposition of the imperialist plans and advance the revolutionary struggle for socialism and for a workers' government.

Related document:

<http://lcligacomunista.blogspot.com.br/2014/10/declaracao-da-lc-no-2o-turno-das.html>



"If Aécio defeats Rousseff workers will immediately face increased exploitation and oppression."

Notes

[1]The Workers' Party (Portuguese: Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT) is a centre-left political party in Brazil. Launched in 1980, it is one of the largest and most important left-wing movements of Latin America. It governs at the federal level in a coalition government with several other parties since January 1, 2003. After the 2010 parliamentary election, PT became the largest party in the Chamber of Deputies and the second largest in the Federal Senate for the first time ever. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the President with the highest approval rating in the history of the country, is PT's most prominent member. His successor, Dilma Rousseff, is also a member of PT; she took office on January 1, 2011. (Wiki, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workers%27_Party_%28Brazil%29)

[2]Originally a centre-left party (with social-democratic intentions, though they never held any actual strength in the unions) at the time of its foundation, PSDB moved to the right after Fernando Henrique Cardoso forged an alliance with the right-wing Liberal Front Party and was elected President of Brazil. The third largest party in the National Congress, PSDB has been the main opposition against the administrations of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff. (Wiki -http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazilian_Social_Democracy_Party)

[3]Mark Weisbrot, The Hill, *Economic issues could be decisive in Brazilian presidential election*:

"First, the record of the Workers' Party (PT), which has been in power for nearly 12 years. Their most-cited achievement has been in the area of poverty reduction, with the poverty rate falling by 55 percent since 2003, and extreme poverty by 65 percent... The government's expansion of the Bolsa Família program from 16.2 million to 57.8 million people, and an 84 percent real (inflation-adjusted) increase in the minimum wage were also a huge boost to poor people... President Rousseff was too generous when she said that the PSDB had "governed for just one-third of the country." It was a much tinier group that benefitted from such giveaways as massive privatizations, while the economy stagnated. It would be surprising if a majority of Brazilians were to vote for a return to the failed, less inclusionary policies of the past." <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/international/221732-economic-issues-could-be-decisive-in-brazilian-presidential>

